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Great Patriotic War: Unknown War

Alexey Kilichenkov
A
Short Course

Great | Patriotic
WARRIORS

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Design by artist P. Volkov

Kilichenkov A. A. ,

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Entire libraries have been written about the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people — thousands of volumes, tens of thousands of articles. But this work stands out sharply from the others. The author has set himself a seemingly impossible task - to write a kind of "short course" of the Great Patriotic War, containing all the events of the four war years in the framework of one book. Previously, only Tippleskirch and Liddell Hart had managed to do this. Such an approach makes it possible to take a unified view of the historical process, without drowning in details, to see the war not as a human being.

several battles, but as a whole, to discern the hidden connections and the true causes of events ...

Two centuries ago, the Napoleonic General Joubert said: "Everything precise is short." This catchphrase can be fully attributed to the book by Alexei Kilichenkov, which, for all its depth and professionalism, is written so extraordinary, vividly and captivantly that it is read like a historical novel - in one breath.

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In memory of my grandfather, Nikon Fedorovich Komkov,

a simple soldier who went through the whole war and
died on May 9, 1945.

INTRODUCTION

We are not free from history. No matter how it seems to us that "everything passes, this too will pass," history continues to live next to us, live in us and never goes anywhere. We constantly turn to our history, and not so much to remember something long forgotten, but to understand what is happening to us now.

And among those events that our society refers to most often, the Great Patriotic War occupies a special place. The former intensity of passions over the revolutions of 1917 has already died down, the serious passions that once boiled around the NEP have long been forgotten, the problem of Stalinist repressions of the 1930s has receded into the background. But the events of the Great Patriotic War still excite society. Moreover, it was precisely the controversy surrounding the causes of the tragedy of 1941 that gave rise to two unprecedented phenomena. The first of these was the formation, in fact, of a new historical community, which recruited under its banner an entire generation of researchers whose professional interest in history for the first time turned out to be dictated not by a specialty in a diploma, but by a true vocation. It was through his efforts that the "folkization" (from YuzhK-Shogu) of the history of the war of 1941-1945 was started. For the first time in the entire period of fierce historical disputes that began in the late 1980s, the previously existing professional (this time really with a diploma) community of historians turned out to be truly split precisely because of the difference in views on the problem of 1941. Which in itself is a phenomenal phenomenon.

What are the reasons for such an unusual attitude to the history of the Great Patriotic War? The first among them, of course,

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the lingering popular memory of the war must be named. In January 2005, on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, a cross-country study of society's attitude to the events of this war was conducted in a number of countries of Western and Eastern Europe. It turned out that 88% of Russian and 87% of Ukrainian families often or from time to time talk about the war. In European countries, this is said on average one and a half to two times less: in Germany - 38%, Austria - 48%, Poland - 59% of families. At the same time, 72% of Russians and Ukrainians consider themselves well and more or less well informed about the war, in Germany this part is 56%, in Austria - 48%, Poland - 69%. We can say that the war is still considered as if "ours", a kind of "our war".

The second, no less important circumstance is the political aspect of the history of the Great Patriotic War. The volleys of the festive Victory Salute had not had time to thunder, when a new war began - an ideological one - a war with the "inconvenient truth". Its outcome is known. The most important, most painful questions - the causes of the disaster of the 41st and the cost of the Victory, as well as many others, have not found an intelligible answer. These questions, and with them the whole history of the greatest and most terrible war, were covered by a kaleidoscope of ideological myths, which created the main premise for the "historical revelations" of the late perestroika of the 1980s and the early democratization of the 1990s. Their goal was clearly political - the new elite, going to Olympus of power, needed to discredit its enemy - the Soviet regime, and for this it was necessary to knock out historical supports from under it. One of the main ones was the victory in the war against fascism, which served as indisputable proof of both the power and effectiveness of the regime. And no matter how indisputable our Victory seemed, but the depth and scale of the revealed shocking truth of the war was such that for some time the very image of our Victory changed - from a heroized and romanticized myth to a repulsive image of a bloody and absolutely unprofessional action of a criminal regime. It is not surprising that the public consciousness instinctively rejected this new image. And instead

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From the previous questions, one main question arose: how, then, and thanks to what, were we still able to win this war?

The time has come to "gather stones", and history is again needed, because without knowledge of history it is practically impossible to construct any goal-setting activity of even a single person. History is a hundred times more important when it comes to constructing a new state identity. But on the way to a new acquisition of the history of the Great Patriotic War, other political problems also arose. They manifested themselves most clearly on the eve of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Victory, when, among other things, some countries of the European

nership with Russia, depending on the interpretation by our country of the well-known events of the Second World War.

It is at this intersection of political interest and

The vanished "sick memory" of society and there arose that unprecedented demand for literature about the war, which can be observed daily in our bookstores.

The book brought to the attention of the reader is yet another attempt to touch upon the history of the Great Patriotic War. This attempt was the result of my own rethinking of the events of the war in the process of finding answers to the countless questions of students that arose during lectures on the history of Russia in the twentieth century. The student audience, according to the author, is the most grateful, but also the most inquisitive, and its questions always reflect the essence of the modern vision of war. All this required an understanding of the history of the Great Patriotic War as a whole, as part of a larger phenomenon - the Second World War. At the same time, a fairly concise presentation of the material was required, concentrating on the main thing. These features determined the purpose of this publication - to present a short course on the history of our country's participation in World War II, focusing the reader's attention on its most problematic pages.

Part 1 "IF TOMORROW WALKING..."

The period of World War II, which began on September 1, 1939, and ended on June 22, 1941, was of decisive importance both for the development of the war as a whole and for the participation of the Soviet Union in it. It was during this period that the scale and nature of the war was determined, the main forces of the opposing sides were deployed, and the most important decisions were made that determined the further course of hostilities. When studying the history of the Second World War as a whole, it is precisely this issue that seems to be the most reasonable and productive. However, since we are talking about the participation of the Soviet Union in the events of this period of the war, it is advisable to consider them through the prism of their significance for the history of Soviet society and the state.

Where should you focus your attention then? Head-. The totality of questions pertaining to the preparation of the USSR for war seems to be a daunting one. How did the Soviet political leadership prepare the country for war in the context of its expansion and approach to its borders? To what extent was this policy adequate to the requirements of the changing situation? And what was the state of society and its armed forces in the end on the eve of June 22

1941?

After the outbreak of World War II and as a result of

of the Soviet-German Pact On August 23, 1939, the political leadership of the Soviet Union had a rare historical chance to remain in a position "above the fray" for almost 22 months. First of all, in conditions when the major world powers were drawn into the war, the Soviet leadership received freedom of action. The Soviet leaders retained the freedom to choose one ally or another;

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the opportunity to join one side or another, while demanding appropriate compensation. For a certain time, the moment of entry into the war was also determined by the choice of the Soviet Union. And, finally, the Soviet military-political leadership, observing the course of the war in Europe, received a unique opportunity to determine exactly how the enemy would act after the inevitable outbreak of war with him. The Wehrmacht during the campaigns of 1939-1940 opened his "blitzkrieg laboratory", demonstrating the entire arsenal of political and military means to achieve victory. The Soviet command could now purposefully work out at training grounds and in academic auditoriums the most effective ways to deal with a potential enemy. The political leadership, drawing lessons from the experience of the struggle in Europe, was able to accurately model the nature and extent of the impending war, the degree of involvement of society in it and the amount of effort required to achieve victory.

This most favorable situation from the military and political point of view was supplemented by an equally favorable situation inside the country. Unlike European countries, where the society, being "bruised" by the syndrome of the First World War, did not want to hear about the possibility of a new war!, the Soviet people lived for a whole decade in anticipation of its inevitability. Under these conditions, the Soviet political leadership could, practically without obstacles, both within the country and outside it, conduct purposeful preparations for a world war.

It is expedient to consider the process of the Soviet Union's preparation for war in four main aspects—the state's foreign policy activity, the state of the economy, society's moral readiness for war, and the training of the armed forces.

" For more on this, see: Blok M. A strange defeat / Per. from fr. - M.: ROSSPEN, 1999. S. 146-153.

PUSHING THE FRONTIERS OF WAR

In a situation of inevitability of war, the main task of the foreign policy of the USSR was to be to ensure the most favorable balance of forces for the fight against the enemy. the best

the means for this would be the conclusion of a military alliance as strong as possible in composition, on the one hand, and the foreign political isolation of the enemy, on the other. The second task of foreign policy is to create the most favorable conditions and time for entry into the war. Hypothetically, this meant a situation where the country and its armed forces were most ready to start a war, relations with allies were formalized in the form of specific military obligations and agreed plans for joint actions, and the enemy was maximally weakened or not ready to start a war. And the third, no less important task is to ensure the most favorable strategic position for our own armed forces, in which they are able to carry out the tasks of either defense or decisive offensive operations with the maximum efficiency.

Let's try to find out how successful the Soviet foreign policy, the actions of the political leadership of the USSR were able to solve these problems.

Relations of the Soviet Union with potential allies

Kami against Germany became the result of the conclusion of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact of 1939 and the war that began soon after in Europe. August 23 I.V. Stalin and V.M. Molotov, who almost single-handedly decided foreign policy issues at that time!, made a choice in favor of Germany. The Soviet leadership preferred the concrete benefits of the pact to the rather uncertain prospects of a possible Anglo-French-Soviet military alliance. However, it is important to note that the turn of Soviet policy from the possible

'
Historians have not yet been able to find Politburo documents related to the history of the conclusion of the Soviet-German pact; which allows us to assume that the most important issues were decided solely by I.V. Stalin, possibly with the participation of V.M. Molotov. (See: Chubaryan A.O. Soviet foreign policy (September 1 - the end of October 1939) / War and politics, 1939-1941. - M.: Nauka, 1999. P. 7)

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th alliance with England and France to cooperate with Germany took place very carefully. This was explained primarily both by the suddenness of the German initiative and by the scale of the proposals made. Throughout September-October 1939, Soviet diplomacy acted gradually. On the one hand, Moscow was in no hurry to seize that part of Polysha that fell into the "sphere of interest" of the USSR according to the secret protocol of the August 23 pact. Only on September 17, after repeated and persistent wishes from the German side, did the Soviet troops receive an order to cross the Polish border and move towards the Wehrmacht, which had already reached the line of demarcation of "spheres of German and Soviet interests in Poland." On the other hand, the Soviet leadership tried in every possible way to reassure England and France, who feared possible allied relations between the USSR and Germany. And in general, Soviet diplomacy succeeded. Simultaneously with the invasion of Poland

the territory of the Red Army, Moscow makes a statement about the neutrality of the Soviet Union in the outbreak of war. British and French diplomacy readily accepts this position. Some British politicians came to the conclusion that the Soviet Union invaded Poland "in order to deter the Germans"². And as early as October 1939, the question of the possibility of concluding a trade treaty with the Soviet Union was being seriously discussed in British government circles. The Allies perceive the appearance of Soviet troops in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania quite calmly, where they were introduced after the conclusion by these states of mutual assistance pacts with the USSR in September-October. This could not help but push the Soviet leadership to further expansion in Eastern Europe. Realizing that the neutrality of the USSR in the conditions of the flaring war in Europe was vital for England and France, Stalin

1 See: Chubaryan A.O. Soviet foreign policy... P.8.

? See Pozdeeva L.V. 1939: Soviet politics through the eyes of the British / Voy nai politika, 1939-1941. - M.: Nauka, 1999. P. 132.

3 Ibid. P.131.

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began to act more decisively. In fact, the same mechanism began to operate in the position of the Western powers as in relation to German expansion in the late 1930s. — the fear of unleashing war tied the hands of active diplomacy.

On September 28, 1939, the Soviet leadership crossed a kind of "foreign policy Rubicon" by concluding a new treaty "on friendship and borders" with Germany. It was not a matter of establishing a common state border, which was rather a technical issue, and not of an "exchange" of territories, after which Lithuania entered the "sphere of interests" of the USSR. The Soviet leadership, having cast aside hesitation in its choice, openly stakes on Germany, bluntly declaring "the further development of friendly relations between their peoples"! From that moment on, deepening until the spring of 1941, cooperation between the Soviet Union and Germany in various fields began.

Economic cooperation has become the most important for both sides. The first step in its development was taken on the eve of the signing of the non-aggression pact - August 19, 1939, when a loan agreement was concluded for a total of 380 million marks. In exchange for deliveries to Germany of oil, cotton, grain, phosphates and other raw materials, the Soviet Union received armor, machine tools, optical instruments³. The signing of the treaty "on friendship and borders" gave a new impetus to mutually beneficial trade. And both sides tried to extract the maximum benefit. When under-

When preparing a new agreement in October 1939, the German delegation headed by K. Schnurre expected to purchase strategic raw materials in the amount of 1.5 billion marks, offering, in turn, manufactured goods worth 1 billion marks. But the counterproposal of the delegation of A. Mikoyan plunged the Germans into amazement - the "Soviets" wanted to receive goods for the same amount, and, most importantly, it was almost one weapon. The list of orders included a wide range - from rangefinders to heavy cruisers, from binoculars to tanks, from sights to samples of all

1 Cited. In: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Military-historical essays. - Book 1. M., 1998. P. 489.

? There. P.76.

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(!) German planes'. The Soviet political leaders, realizing that Germany was extremely interested in obtaining strategic raw materials in anticipation of the start of an offensive in the West, simply "upped the stakes." However, the list of Soviet demands was too long even under these conditions. The outcome of the "Economic agreement between Germany and the USSR" concluded on February 11, 1940 in Moscow turned out to be more modest for both sides. The USSR was supposed to supply Germany with raw materials worth 800 million marks, incl. 900 thousand tons of oil, 500 thousand tons of iron ore, 100 thousand tons of chrome ore and thousands of tons of non-ferrous metals. The cost of Soviet supplies also included the transit of strategic materials to Germany from Iran, Afghanistan and other countries. In turn, the Soviet Union received from Germany goods and services worth 600 million marks. The deliveries included samples of armaments and military equipment, incl. armored vehicles, aircraft and the unfinished heavy cruiser Lützow>?.

Soviet assistance to the German naval forces also turned out to be significant. In October 1939, the Soviet government proposed to the German command that they set up a naval base on the Kola Peninsula, 35 miles from Murmansk. This base was named "Basis Nord". It was intended to be used by German ships and submarines for repairs and refueling in the same way as other Soviet ports. However, Soviet-German cooperation did not end there. In the summer and autumn of 1940, the Soviet icebreakers Lenin, Stalin, and Kaganovich led the German raider Komet, disguised as a merchant ship, through the Northern Sea Route to the Pacific Ocean. Having entered the Pacific, and then the Indian Ocean, he began to sink British merchant ships?.

1 See: Strandman von H.P. Growing paradoxes: Hitler, Stalin and German-Soviet economic ties. 1939-1941 / War and politics, E - M .: Nauka, 1999. S. 373.

* There. pp. 374-375.

3 See: Three centuries of the Russian fleet. In Zt. V.2/B.I.Rodionov, N.Yu.Bere-

zovsky, V.Yu. Gribovsky and others / Ed. I.V. Kasatonova. - SPb., 1996. S. 368-369.

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Relying on the support of Germany, the Soviet leadership is starting to "solve" the Finnish question. Initially, the Soviet government intended to use the same model for solving the problem as in the case of the Baltic countries. But the intransigence of the Finnish side, which did not agree to provide bases for the deployment of units of the Soviet armed forces, put the Soviet Union before the need to use force. Relying on the overwhelming superiority of their armed forces over the small Finnish army and the non-interference of the Western powers, I.V. Stalin starts howling NU. November 30, 1939 Red Army troops begin fighting on the Finnish border. The next day in the city of Terijoki (now the city of Zelenogorsk) "the people's government of the Finnish Democratic Republic" was proclaimed, headed by the well-known leader of the Comintern, Otto Kuusinen. The USSR immediately recognized this government and concluded a treaty of mutual assistance and friendship with it. However, the calculations of the Soviet politicians this time did not come true. The attempt to create a puppet government in Terijoki caused a sharply negative reaction from the world community. The Soviet "blitzkrieg" did not work either. Hostilities became protracted and bloody, the world community sharply condemned Soviet aggression - on December 14, the USSR was expelled from the League of Nations, and by the end of December there was a real threat of intervention in the conflict by European powers - primarily England and France. And yet, in February 1940, the Red Army managed to achieve decisive successes at the front, and the war ended with the conclusion of a peace treaty on March 12, 1940. The Soviet Union received part of the Finnish territory on the Karelian Isthmus, on the Kola Peninsula, the peninsula was leased Hanko (former Gangut). The most important result of this war was considered to be that it was possible to move the border away from Leningrad, but the lease of a naval base on

b Baryshnikov N.I., Baryshnikov V.N. Government in Terijoki/Winter War 1939-1940. Book one. Political history. - M.: Nauka, 1999. P. 178.

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Hanko. Together with the bases on the territory of Estonia and the Moonsund Islands, it was possible to restore the defense system of the mouth of the Gulf of Finland that existed at the beginning of the century, which blocked the enemy from approaching Leningrad from the sea. Actually, the military result was not in favor of the Red Army, it suffered

the heaviest losses.

LOSSES OF THE belligerents
in the SOVIET-FINNISH WAR, 1939-1940

dead and dead missing

wounded, sick

Equipment and weapons, units

aircraft

In the spring and summer of 1940, the situation in Europe changed dramatically again. In April, Germany seizes Denmark and Norway with a sudden and swift blow. In May, also unexpectedly for the allies, the Wehrmacht strikes at Belgium, Holland and invades France through their territory. The combined Anglo-French forces suffer a crushing defeat. And already on June 22, France capitulates. It took Germany only six (!) weeks to crush the most powerful military power in Europe. The most amazing "blitzkrieg" in the history of wars radically changed the balance of power in Europe. The former scheme, which is described

! Compiled from: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century: Statistical research.
— M.: OLMA-PRESS, 2001. S. 213; Winter war 1939-1940. Book one. Political history. M.: Nauka, 1999. P.325.

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rallied Stalin in his foreign policy calculations, collapsed. Now Hitler, having eliminated for a time the potential threat of a war on two fronts, was free to act in the East. The close possibility of a clash between the USSR and Germany loomed more and more clearly. For Stalin, this meant the need to choose a new course. And again, as in 1939, this was prompted by the actions of British diplomacy. July 1, 1940 the British ambassador to the USSR S. Cripps conveyed to I. Stalin a message from W. Churchill, who was trying to clarify the position of the Soviet leadership in the new alignment of forces!. In fact, this could be regarded as an attempt to create a basis for joint action against Germany. However, this time Stalin also stakes on Germany - a few days after the meeting with Cripps, Molotov handed over the summary of this meeting to the German ambassador in Moscow, F. von Schulenburg, revealing "all cards" to the Germans? At the same time, the Soviet leadership takes the next step in territorial expansion. In mid-June, additional

formations of the Red Army, at the same time, the Soviet government sent notes to the leaders of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania demanding to change the composition of governments in order to "honestly implement" mutual assistance treaties with the USSR?. Soon new governments were formed. Then the Soviet Union shifts the direction of its expansion to the south. On June 26, the Soviet government demanded that Romania return Bessarabia. At the end of June, units of the Red Army were introduced into the territory of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. In early August, these lands were included in the established Moldavian SSR and Ukraine. On the same days, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were admitted to the USSR as republics. Absorption by the Soviet Union of the Baltic republics

| Robert J. Churchill and Stalin. Episodes of Anglo-Soviet Relations (September - 1939 - June 1941) / War and Politics, 1939-1941. - M.: Nauka, 1999. S. 148- 149.

? There. P.149.

3 See: Orlov A.S. USSR and the Baltics. 1939-1940 / War and politics, 1939-1941. - M.: Nauka, 1999. P. 200.

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the public was extremely negatively perceived in the West. Relations with England and the USA deteriorated markedly.

However, this reaction did not worry the Soviet leadership too much. Much more important was the reaction of Germany. And if the accession of Bessarabia was fully consistent with the content of the secret protocol to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, since this territory was part of the "sphere of interest" of the Soviet Union, then the "inclusion of the Baltic countries into the USSR and especially the seizure of Northern Bukovina caused concern on the German side." From this moment, a period of obvious cooling of relations and diplomatic confrontation between the two countries begins. Germany takes revenge. At the end of August 1940, arbitration was held in Vienna over the territorial dispute between Hungary and Romania with the participation of Italy and Germany. Not only was the Soviet Union not invited to participate in the arbitration, but Germany acted as a guarantor of the new borders of Romania, which the Soviet side regarded as a direct violation of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact?. In September, relations became even more complicated. German troops appeared on the territory of Romania and Finland, and on September 27 a German-Italian-Japanese military alliance treaty (Triple Pact) was signed in Berlin. Moreover, in all these events, the Soviet Union was confronted with a fact. The visit of the head of the Soviet government and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V. Molotov to Berlin on November 12-13, 1940 was supposed to dot the "i". However, the visit, in fact, ended in nothing. Molotov's attempt to resolve the issues "poisoning German-Russian relations" did not bring results. The proposals put forward by Germany

The terms of joining the pact were clearly unacceptable to the Soviet side. The accession to the Tripartite Pact of Hungary and Romania that took place soon only emphasized the rigidity of the position of German diplomacy. Moscow tried to resist German pressure in the Balkans. In con

In November the Soviet government offered Bulgaria for

And

! See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 37.
* There. S. 37.

3 See: Kulkov E.N. Soviet reaction to the conclusion of the Three Power Pact / War and Politics, 1939-1941. — M.: Nauka, 1999.S. 391.

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sign a mutual assistance pact, but this proposal was rejected. After the failure of the Molotov mission to Berlin, the "moment of truth" came for the Soviet leadership.

From the recording of the conversations of the writer Konstantin Simonov with Marshal A.M. Vasilevsky: "That the Germans were preparing for war and that it would be, despite the pact (1939 - A.K.), everyone who traveled in November 1940 with Molotov to Berlin was convinced. I also traveled as part of this delegation as one of the representatives of the General Staff. After this trip, after the receptions and conversations there, none of us had the slightest doubt that Hitler was holding a stone in his bosom. Molotov himself was also told about this. As far as I understood, he also adhered to this point of view.

The continuation of the former position of Soviet policy, which was based on cooperation with Germany and the rejection of any attempts by Britain and the United States towards rapprochement, was becoming more and more doubtful. In fact, relations with Germany had reached their limit - there was no longer anything to share for mutual benefit, a military alliance seemed impossible for both sides. The further rate of the German leadership on the preservation of neutrality by the Soviet Union in the face of the impossibility of an early victory over England made Germany extremely vulnerable, and the Soviet position too strong, which was obviously unacceptable to Hitler. In this situation, a clash with Germany was only a matter of time. And the lack of understanding of the essence of this situation gave the initiative to the leadership of Germany in advance.

Against this background, the expansion of economic cooperation between the USSR and Germany looked especially significant. Despite the obvious complication of diplomatic relations by the end of 1940 and the failure of V. Molotov's mission to Berlin, trade and economic cooperation continued, and on January 10, 1941, there was

a new "Business Agreement" was signed. The total volume of trade under this agreement reached its peak in May 1941. Oil trains continued to flow into Germany without stopping,

1 Simonov K. Through the eyes of a man of my generation. Reflections on I.V. Stalin. - M., 1990. S. 358-359.

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non-ferrous metals, grain, cotton, and to the Soviet Union - industrial equipment, armor, weapons, technology. In total, in the period from August 23, 1939 to June 22, 1941, the amount of orders placed by both countries reached 3 billion marks, and the amount of completed orders - 1.2 billion marks (.

In the spring of 1941, Soviet diplomacy made its last attempt at political influence on Germany's position. On April 5, the Soviet-Yugoslav Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression was signed in Moscow. But the German reaction to this attempt was quick and harsh - the next day, units of the Wehrmacht crossed the Yugoslav border. On April 15, Yugoslavia capitulated. Perhaps the only tangible success of Soviet foreign policy was the conclusion of a pact of neutrality with Japan on April 13, 1941, which significantly reduced the threat of war on two fronts.

Let us sum up some of the results of Soviet foreign policy in the period 1939-1941. |

During the 22 months of "peaceful respite" bought at the price of rapprochement with Germany and the rejection of possible cooperation with Britain, France and the United States, the Soviet leadership pursued an active foreign policy, the results of which turned out to be very contradictory.

- On the one hand, the direct result of this policy was the successful expansion in the western direction, the inclusion of a number of independent states in the USSR and the rejection of a number of territories of neighboring countries. The results of economic cooperation with Germany were very palpable. The Soviet economy received a large number of machine tools, equipment, and new technologies. And, perhaps most importantly, samples of German weapons and military equipment, including the latest ones, were at the disposal of the command of the Red Army and the navy. They have been carefully studied. Industry specialists could get acquainted with the latest German equipment and technology, use this experience in creating new equipment for the Red Army. Technical specialists of the army and navy received excellent

new opportunity to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the German

' See Strandman von H.P. Decree. op. S. 367.

technology and develop the most effective means and methods of fighting the enemy immediately before the start of the war. No army of that time received such an opportunity.

But there were also very negative consequences. Thus, Germany fulfilled its obligations for deliveries to the Soviet Union by no means in full. By June 22, 1941, Germany had fulfilled its part of the obligations in the amount of only 68% of the volume of Soviet deliveries. This meant that Germany owed the Soviet Union 234.2 million marks.

But the political consequences were the main ones. First of all, right at the moment of the beginning of the war with Germany, the Soviet Union still found itself alone. The future anti-Hitler coalition had to be created after the start of the war, agreeing on the mechanisms of interaction. It all took time. And what! Recall that in the first days of the war, the Wehrmacht advanced through Soviet territory at 60-70 km per day! But this is not just a territory, it is hundreds of thousands of Soviet people who fell into occupation for many years. Germany, on the contrary, in the same 22 months managed to create a whole coalition of European states, whose armed forces, together with the Wehrmacht, attacked the USSR in June 1941.

In the same way, the advance of the USSR state border to the west had its negative consequences. The victory in the "winter war" was truly "pyrrhic" for the USSR. The price per square kilometer of Finnish territory was incommensurable with the benefits received. The main thing was that the original goals of "absorption" of Finland were not achieved. In fact, this was the first defeat in the process of Soviet expansion. One more thing. The West was completely impressed by the demonstration of the military weakness of the Red Army. Against the backdrop of the stunning successes of the Wehrmacht in Europe, this looked especially striking. And, perhaps, the most significant military-political result of this war was that instead of a potentially neutral country on the northwestern border near the strategically important center of the USSR - Leningrad - we got a real enemy, literally "doomed" to a quick roar.

1 See: Nevakivi Yu. Finland and the Barbarossa Plan/War and Politics, 1939-1941. - M.: Nauka, 1999. S. 445-446.

The inclusion of new territories into the Soviet Union was very ambiguous. On the one hand, thanks to the inclusion of new territories in the USSR, the population increased by 14 million people, and the border was pushed to the west by a distance of 300 to 600 km. But at the same time, it became necessary to equip the line of the new state border and, most importantly,

creation of the necessary infrastructure of border districts. The extent to which this problem was solved is evidenced by the fact that by the beginning of the war in 1941, the capacity of the Soviet railway network in the western theater of operations was more than two times lower than that of the German one, while before the annexation of new territories this ratio was almost equal'. It should also be noted that a part of the population had a very negative attitude towards the Soviet regime in the territories that became part of the USSR. This created excellent opportunities for the recruitment of numerous agents among the population by German intelligence and successful sabotage activities with the outbreak of war.

Thus, the advantages of a military-strategic nature obtained by the Soviet Union as a result of rapprochement with Germany were significantly complicated or almost nullified by the problems that arose. Significant time was required to realize these advantages, and there was no time left. The inconsistency of the results of Soviet foreign policy lay in the fact that they could have a positive effect only with a long respite, which, in fact, I. Stalin counted on, making a choice in favor of rapprochement with Germany. But in a situation where this respite turned out to be too short, the opposite effect arose - all the pluses turned into minuses.

"AND THE DASHING CARTS WILL RUSH"

It was noted above that the results of Soviet foreign policy during the 22 months preceding the attack of Germ

NII, From the point of view of preparing for the impending war, it turned out
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See: Manning B.V. Soviet railways and military planning

And 1941 / War and Politics, 1939-1941. — M.: Nauka, 1999.S. 359, -364.

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were very contradictory and ambiguous. How was this period used to prepare the Soviet armed forces for the impending war?

The very preparation of the armed forces for war included the following components:

—creation of systems of manning and command and control of the armed forces meeting the requirements of the time, of the appropriate structure of the army and navy (an optimal combination of types of armed forces and combat arms).

- equipping the armed forces with the necessary weapons, equipment, basing and support systems, and the corresponding infrastructure.

— preparation of the rank and file of the armed forces for war.

- the necessary generalization and use of the experience of the outbreak of World War II in the training of the armed forces.

Period 1939 - 1941 became a time of intensive growth and reform for the Soviet armed forces. As early as September 1, 1939, the day the Second World War began, the USSR adopted a law on the transition to personnel acquisition of the armed forces instead of a mixed system that combined territorial police formations with personnel ones. The new system was supposed to provide a qualitative improvement in the combat training of military formations in peacetime. At the same time, a rapid growth in the total strength of the Red Army begins. If in August 1939 the number of spacecraft was more than two million people, consisting of 98 divisions and 5 brigades, then by June 1941 the total number of divisions was increased to 303, brigades - 22, numbering over 5.373 million people .1. The number of military equipment that entered service with the Red Army was rapidly increasing. By the beginning of the war, Soviet aviation had 20.8 thousand aircraft (of which 15.9 thousand were combat). The Red Army artillery consisted of 110.4 thousand guns and mortars. The size of the USSR Navy also increased, it included 277 ships.

1 See: History of the Second World War. M., 1975.V.4. P.18. See also: Pechenkin A.A. Was it possible to advance? / Another war. M., 1996. S.187.

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lei of the main classes (including 3 battleships, 7 cruisers, 56 destroyers, 211 submarines), 2.7 thousand aircraft, 7.1 thousand coastal defense guns.

The tank troops of the Red Army grew especially rapidly. The Soviet military theoreticians V. Triandafillov and M. Tukhachevsky, back in the thirties, correctly identified the decisive importance of this type of troops in a future war. Moreover, it was concluded that it was necessary to use tanks as part of special formations - tank corps, a kind of "armored fists" of the army, designed for independent operations in the depths of enemy defenses. The corps had to carry out deep envelopment and encirclement of the main enemy forces, which predetermined his complete defeat and the final success of the operation. This was a truly revolutionary approach to the use of tanks. In France and England, other views prevailed - there tanks were used to support the actions of the infantry in its battle formations to break through the enemy's defenses. In Germany, thanks to the efforts of the theorist and practice of tank warfare, Heinz Guderian,

adopted the doctrine of the use of tanks, close, in fact, to the Soviet one. As a result, both in the Red Army and in the Wehrmacht in the second half of the thirties, first tank divisions appeared, and then tank corps (in Germany, tank divisions were combined into tank groups). During the last prewar year, 61 tank and 31 mechanized divisions were formed in the Red Army. Tank troops by June 1941 totaled 23.1 thousand tanks?.

As a result of all the measures taken by the Soviet government, by June 1941 the Soviet armed forces had become the largest in the world. In fact, the Red Army was transformed from a peacetime army into an army of a country at war. Under the conditions of the escalating war in Europe, this, of course, was necessary, especially since the USSR itself was more and more drawn into the war.

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See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. P.90.

to there. S. 83.

There. S. 90.

However, this large-scale growth and reformation of the Red Army had its downside. An increase in the number of divisions by more than three times meant in practice that two thirds of the formations of the Red Army were in the process of recruitment by the time the war with Germany began. They still had to work out the interaction, the headquarters to gain the necessary management experience, the personnel to get the necessary training - to master the equipment, weapons and tactics of their use. As a result of all this, the combat readiness of the new formations remained low.

From the order of the People's Commissar of Defense Marshal S.K. Timoshenko No. 120, 05/16/1940

"The experience of the war in the Karelian-Finnish theater revealed major shortcomings in combat training and education of the army. [...]

The interaction of military branches in battle, especially in the link company - battery, battalion - division, was the bottleneck. The main reason for the poor interaction between the military branches was the poor knowledge of the command staff of the combat properties and capabilities of other military branches.

The infantry went to war the least prepared of all the military branches: it did not know how to conduct close combat, fight in trenches, did not know how to use the results of artillery fire and support its offensive with the fire of heavy machine guns, mortars, battalion and regimental artillery. Artillery, tanks and other types of troops also had a number of shortcomings in their combat training, especially in matters of interaction with the infantry and ensuring its success in battle. In the combat training of the air forces, the inability to interact with ground forces, unpreparedness for flights in difficult conditions, and the poor quality of bombing, especially against narrow targets, were sharply revealed.

The training of command personnel did not meet modern combat requirements. [...] The senior and top command staff poorly organized interaction, made poor use of headquarters, clumsily set tasks for artillery, tanks, and especially aviation. The commanders of the reserve were exceptionally poorly trained and often completely unable to fulfill their duties. [...]

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Combat experience was not studied or used. The headquarters were poorly engaged in preparing troops for the upcoming actions. Troop control was characterized by haste, lack of thought, lack of study and analysis of the situation, foreseeing the subsequent development of events and preparation for them. Often there was excessive interference of senior bosses in the work of junior ones. [...]

The intelligence service was organized and carried out extremely unsatisfactorily. [...] The troops ineptly conducted reconnaissance in the conditions of the forest, winter and the fortified zone of the enemy, they did not know how to take prisoners. In all branches of the armed forces, the surveillance service was especially poorly set up.

The command and staffs of all levels poorly organized and ineptly directed the work of the rear. There was no discipline in the rear. There was no order on the roads, especially in the rear of the army.

The organization of assistance to the wounded was intolerably bad and untimely.

The troops were not trained in railroad crossings.

All these shortcomings in the preparation of the army for war were mainly the result of the wrong military education of the soldier and commander, who were guided by an easy victory over a weak enemy, and an incorrect system of combat training, which did not accustom the troops to the harsh conditions of modern war.

But the consequences of the rapid growth of the Red Army were not exhausted by this. An increase in the number of divisions by a factor of three, while the total strength of the Red Army increased by only one and a half times, meant that the new formations were only 50-70% complete. According to the scheme adopted in the Soviet armed forces, the total number of formations (divisions) was approximately equal both in peacetime and at the start of the war. This meant that in the peacetime the divisions had an incomplete strength, and with the beginning of the mobilization of the Central Research Institute, they had to be understaffed with personnel and the necessary equipment withdrawn from the national economy. This

The scheme had its advantages. So, the backbone of the division and, first of all,

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b "Winter War": work on the mistakes (April - May 1940). Materials of the commissions of the Main Military Council of the Red Army on the generalization of the experience of the Tabin campaign. — M.: SPb.: Summer garden. 2004, pp. 393-395.

For example, its headquarters were created and could gain management experience already in peacetime. The assigned staff from among the conscripts at the place of deployment of the division was called to the training camp, where they received the necessary training. With the beginning of the war, it was enough to bring the subunits to full strength, and the division became combat ready. But the disadvantages of this scheme were no less significant. In case of redeployment of the division, the problem of its additional staffing, and first of all with equipment (cars, tractors, tractors) and horses, became difficult to solve due to the need to re-establish interaction with local authorities. But even in the case of successful understaffing on time, a long period was required to gain full combat readiness. In the end, this meant that before the completion of mobilization and for a certain time after it, practically the entire army remained still not fully combat-ready.

A particularly difficult situation has developed with the provision of troops with vehicles. To complete the army, 755,878 vehicles of all types were required, but by the beginning of the war there were 272,140, which was only 36% of the required number. Besides, only 55% of the available cars were fully serviceable? Only after the announcement of general mobilization, the troops were to receive cars, tractors, tractors, horse-drawn carts, etc. from the national economy. This in itself was problematic, since by the beginning of June 1941 there were about 700,000 vehicles in the country. To fully staff the army, it was necessary to withdraw more than 540 thousand of them, which in fact left the economy without vehicles. But the most important thing was that after the start of mobilization, the necessary means of communication had to be obtained.

The tank troops of the Red Army also found themselves in a difficult situation.

1 See: Report of the head of the GABTU G. to the main military council of the Red Army ... / Tank breakthrough. Soviet tanks in battles 1937 - 1942: Collection / A. Isaev, M. Svirin, E. Drig, V. Goncharov, I. Koshkin and others; ed.-st. V. Goncharov. Moscow: Yauza, Eksmo. 2007, p. 414.

? See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 85.

3 Ibid.

Army. In the autumn of 1939 the tank corps were disbanded. Based on the Spanish experience and especially the use of tank formations during the invasion of Soviet troops into Eastern Poland, it was concluded that it was impossible for tank formations to interact effectively with infantry and artillery.

lerii due to the cumbersomeness of their structure and the difficulties of management'. At the same time, the German tank formations brilliantly proved their effectiveness in the course of fast-moving campaigns in Poland, and then in Western Europe. Influenced by their success, the Soviet leadership in the spring of 1940 decided to recreate tank formations, which were called "mechanized corps". The formation of nine mechanized corps was started, and a year later, in the spring of 1941, the GKO decided to create another 20 mechanized corps. But the misadventures of the tank troops did not end there. If the Soviet tank corps of the 1939 model had 500 tanks in its composition, then the new mechanized corps turned out to be twice as large, having received | 1,031 tanks, 268 armored vehicles, 358 guns and mortars, 36,000 personnel ?.

It is difficult to understand the logic of the Soviet military leadership. In the autumn of 1939, a tank corps of 500 tanks seemed too cumbersome, and after only six months, a mechanized corps of 1,000 tanks seemed the norm. It is quite remarkable that the German tank divisions had only 147-299 tanks in their composition, the motorized divisions did not have them at all, while the Soviet tank division had 375 tanks, and the motorized division had 275. Soviet military leaders clearly set out to outnumber the future enemy. Another thing is no less important - the first exercises < checking the structure of the Soviet mechanized corps were planned only for the autumn of 1941, i.e. one and a half years (!) after their creation. It was only after the start of the war that it became clear that

a good machination of 1,000 tanks and 36,000 people turned out to be practically

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: See Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book. 1.C. 84.

Drogovoz I. Iron Fist of the Red Army. Tank and mechanized

And the Red Army, 1932-41. - M.: Publishing House "Technology - Youth", S. 16.

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physically uncontrollable, it was sorely lacking means of communication, the speed of tractor-drawn artillery did not allow it to follow the tanks, the number of rifle units did not give the corps the opportunity to consolidate the captured positions! Any redeployment and deployment of mechanized corps forces, not to mention actions on the battlefield, led to a loss of control.

Not all was well with the structure of the Soviet air force either. In 1940, the Red Army Air Forces were reformed. The aviation armies that existed before as operational formations, which were at the disposal of the High Command, were disbanded, and the air divisions that were part of them were subordinated to the command of the districts

(fronts) and individual armies. This was dictated by the desire to ensure maximum interaction between aviation and ground forces, but in practice this led to decentralization in the use of this most powerful means of combat. In Germany, the main form of organization of the air force was the air fleet, which was subordinate to its own command and only interacted with army units or the fleet.

Organizational and structural miscalculations in reforming the rapidly growing Red Army were extremely aggravated by miscalculations in providing the army with the necessary material, repair and training base. The troops were rapidly being saturated with modern weapons, but they were only 15% provided with the appropriate training base. Panzer divisions were already receiving the latest T-34 and KV tanks, but mechanics continued to learn how to drive on old T-26 tanks, which were 2.5-5 times lighter than new vehicles and also had a fundamentally different transmission and engine. In the border air division

1 For more details, see: Goncharov V. Tank battle near Dubno / Tank breakthrough. Soviet tanks in battles 1937-1942: Collection / A. Isaev, M. Svirin, E. Drig, V. Goncharov, I. Koshkin and others; ed.-st. V. Goncharov. Moscow: Yauza, Ex mo. 2007. S. 126-221.

? See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. 84.

3 See: Ibid. P.87.

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districts received new types of aircraft Yak-1, Pe-2, LaGG-3, Il-2, but there was not enough gasoline for training flights. There were not enough airfields. For basing, each air regiment was supposed to have two or three airfields, but in practice two regiments were based on one airfield! Anti-aircraft gunners received new guns capable of firing at high-speed aircraft, incl. and dive bombers, but the troops did not have high-speed targets for training firing?.

Under the conditions of the rapid growth in the number of formations of the Red Army, and the increasing complexity of its structure, stable and reliable communications, the basis of army command and control, acquired especially great importance. However, it was the connection that remained the weakest link. Its main type in the troops remained delegate (transmission of orders by messengers) and telephone. Moreover, the troops, even in the border districts, usually used civilian telephone lines, which made military communications extremely vulnerable. The most modern type of communication, radio, remained little mastered in the troops and was considered unreliable. In fact, this testified to a lack of understanding with the Soviet command of the entire importance of this component of the army's combat power. A direct result of this misunderstanding was the fact that by the beginning of the war and during its first period, even the technical branches of the armed forces - aviation and tank troops were poorly provided with radio communications. Radio stations were equipped only with command

Dir tanks and planes, which forced the tankers to use flags for communication in battle conditions, and the pilots to give signals by shaking their wings. For the connection of ground troops with aviation, it was planned to use white panels in the form of arrows indicating the enemy. Radio communication between ground troops and aviation was not provided for even by the state ?.

These and many other similar facts testified that the Soviet military-political leadership did not understand

1 See Great Patriotic War... P.88. ? There.

3 See: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: On the eve of the war: Mate Riala of the December (1940) Meeting of the top command and political staff of the Red Army. T. 12(1). — M.: TERRA, 1993. P.205.

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the whole depth and essence of the modern organization of the armed forces is not enough. One gets the impression that the main thing for the Soviet leaders was, first of all, the external side of the preparations for war - the number of equipment that entered service, the number of newly formed divisions, the number of ships built. There has never been such an understanding that a modern military machine is an integral system in which every element, even of little significance at first glance, is of decisive importance. Evidence of this was the attitude of the leadership of the armed forces towards the organization and command and control of the armed forces during the war. One of these issues, which did not find a solution on the eve of the war, was the interaction of the army and navy. People's Commissar of the Navy Admiral N.G. Kuznetsov on the eve of the war repeatedly appealed to Marshal S.K. Timoshenko and Chief of the General Staff General of the Army G.K. Zhukov with a proposal to resolve the issue of creating a mechanism for interaction between the fleet and the army, but he was "simply dismissed". Admiral Lu I.V. did not find understanding. Stalin. This problem had to be solved already during the war, which required additional efforts and time. The question of the top leadership of the Soviet armed forces was not resolved before the war either. Initially, it was assumed that the leadership of the Red Army would be carried out by the Main Military Council (GVS) of the Red Army, and the people's commissar of defense would become the commander-in-chief. The composition of the GVS, approved in July 1940, included the People's Commissar of Defense and his deputies, commanders of the largest districts, only A.A. Zhdanov. I.V. Stalin was not included in the GVS at all? And only after the start of the war it turned out that the people's commissar still had to approve his decisions with I.V. Stalin. This required additional time and led to a belated reaction of the Soviet leadership to the fast-paced events. On the second day of the war, the DHW was abolished.

1 See Admiral Kuznetsov: Moscow in the life and fate of the naval commander: Collection of documents and materials / Comp. R.V. Kuznetsova, A.A. Kilichenkov, L.A. Not a retina. - M.: Publishing house of the association "Mosgorarkhiv", 2000. S. 163.

2 See ; "Winter War": work on the mistakes ... S. 410.

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Or only then did Stalin himself take over the functions of commander-in-chief, uniting in his hands the leadership of both the armed forces and the country as a whole.

All of the above problems and shortcomings in the preparation of the Soviet armed forces for war, caused both by rapid growth and miscalculations by the leadership, were complicated by the state of the officer corps. By June 1941, the most acute problem was the shortage of command personnel. 66 thousand officers were not enough to fully staff the army formations. The shortage of commanders was made up for by the call-up of reserve officers and the reduction of the period of study in military schools. As a result, by the beginning of the war, 77.7% of the commanders had served in the army for less than five years.

The general level of education of the officer corps also remained extremely unsatisfactory. 15.9% of the commanders did not have any military education, 30.5% were educated in courses lasting six months or a year?.

A particularly difficult situation has developed with the top command staff of the army and navy. During the repressions of the second half of the 1930s, the army lost all the commanders of military districts (during the war years, a district corresponds to a front or an army), 90% of their deputies, 80% of corps and division commanders, 91% of regiment commanders and their deputies?

A direct consequence of these losses was the rapid promotion of young lower-level officers to command positions - yesterday's battalion commanders were at the head of divisions and even corps, and platoon commanders received regiments under their command. This period is notable for the most dizzying career rises of officers who gained experience of the war in Spain. Major K.M. Gusev, who commanded only a squadron before Spain, received the post of Air Force Commander of the Belarussian Military District, then he was replaced by I.I. Ko Pets, formerly commander of the air squadron. D.G. Pavlov, leaving the post of commander of a tank brigade, returned after Spain

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: See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 136.

Ibid.S. 82.

. There. S. 80.

See: Boris Shaptalov. The test of war. — M.: AST, 2002. S. 52.

NII already to the post of deputy chief, and soon the head of the Armored Directorate of the Red Army. N.G. Kuznetsov - before a business trip to Spain, only a cruiser commander, a year after his return, at the age of 34, he becomes People's Commissar of the Navy. The most amazing takeoff was made by another hero of the Spanish war, P.V. Rychagov - in 1937 he was only a senior lieutenant and flight commander, and in 1940, being only 29 (!) years old, he became the head of the Red Army Air Force Directorate. The Finnish war put forward a new galaxy of military leaders of the highest rank. The most famous of them were M.P. Kir with diarrhea, who stepped from the division commander to the commander of the military district in a year, and S.K. Timoshenko, who commanded the front during the war, and after its end became People's Commissar instead of K.E. Voroshilov.

A wave of such career ups was initiated by I.V. Stalin. Addressing the top commanding staff of the Red Army, he called: "In our army, there is no end of talent ... Do not be afraid to promote people, boldly promote from below ...". This Stalinist call for the nomination of precisely "young and talented", in addition to the desire to make up for the shortage of personnel, had one more aspect. The young "nominees" owed their career entirely to the leader and quite sincerely considered it their first duty to justify such a high trust, i.e. follow literally all the instructions of "Comrade Stalin". This desire was also facilitated by the fact that, as a rule, they did not have the necessary education, experience and authority, i.e. everything that is at the basis of one's own opinion and making an independent decision. By the beginning of the war, almost all the key posts of the Soviet armed forces were representatives of this particular generation of Stalin's "nominees".

In an ordinary, "normal" situation, an officer gradually passed all the stages from a platoon commander to an army commander, mastering each position over a number of years, gaining the skill of commanding all subunits, mastering their interaction with fire support equipment (machine guns, mortars, artillery), tanks and aviation, support forces

| Boris Shoantalov. Decree op. S. 50.

niya - sappers, engineering units, rear services, communications, etc. "Jumping" through several commanding levels led to the fact that the officer did not have time to acquire the most necessary skills and experience in command and control of troops. The more one or another commander skipped steps in his advancement, the more difficult it was for him to control the entrusted unit.

Admiral N.G. Kuznetsov, characterizing the situation of such a rapid rise through the ranks, compared it with

eye rise of the diver from the depths, fraught with the danger of getting decompression sickness. It took years and years of intense study and numerous exercises to finally master the art of commanding a division or corps. Even more difficult were the functions of the commander of an army or district. But movements and new appointments in the Red Army continued until the very beginning of the war. During the last pre-war year, 82% of district commanders, 53% of army commanders, 68.6% of corps commanders and 71.8% of division commanders were replaced. Needless to say, they had to learn to command the troops entrusted to them already during the war, paying for the experience gained with a lot of blood.

Repressions and a massive influx of young recruits, the call-up of storekeepers - all this led to the destruction of the corporate spirit of the officer corps, the deterioration of the morale of commanders, and the fall of authority among subordinates. People's Commissar of Defense S.K. Timoshenko, assessing the state of the command staff shortly after the war with Finland, noted: "The commanders did not command their units, did not hold their subordinates tightly in the hands, getting lost in the general mass of fighters. The authority of the command staff in the middle and junior level is low. The exactingness of command staff is low. Commanders were sometimes criminally tolerant of violations of discipline, squabbles between subordinates, and sometimes even direct disobedience of orders.

The general condition of the commanding cadres of the Soviet armed forces

' See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 81.

y See: Russian Archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR. T. 13(2--1). — M.: TERRA, 1994. S. 135.

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military forces on the eve of the war was fairly accurately assessed by foreign observers and the future enemy. German intelligence, assessing the state of the officer corps of the Red Army, noted: "The characteristic features of the Russians: slowness, stereotype, indecision and fear of responsibility ... The commanders of all links in the near future are still not suitable for the skillful management of large modern formations. They are incapable of ... quickly engaging in battle in a favorable situation and acting independently ... ". The US military attache in the USSR gave a similar assessment: "The leadership of the army consists of uneducated and even ignorant people. As a result of the purge of 1938, capable military leaders were expelled from the army, which made its current senior command staff qualitatively inferior"².

It is noteworthy that foreign observers especially noted the lack of initiative and the fear of making a decision, and as a result, the inability to act independently, especially in extreme situations. These shortcomings

manifested themselves during hostilities both in the Far East and in the "winter war". And almost in the field conditions of the Red Army's invasion of Poland, which was also noted by the participants in the events from the Soviet side.

From the memoirs of Army General A.V. Khruleva:

"In September 1939, I had a chance to directly observe the campaign of our troops in Western Ukraine, which made a difficult, simply depressing impression. The columns moved without a predetermined order, and difficulties were created on the roads due to the fact that cars, tractors and horses were constantly mixed. All of these vehicles had their own speeds. In addition to everything else,

As a result, there were big "traffic jams" when a tractor stopped on the road in some grandiose column, stretched for almost 30-40 km. And: so I watched: at night there is a column

1 Cited. In: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 81. ? There. S. 495.

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on ... literally everything was asleep and stood at night, somewhere there was a traffic jam, maybe the driver fell asleep, and - paralysis! And you could find the division commander (emphasized by me. - A.K.), who did not get out of the car and did not take the necessary measures. There was no regulation service, no road service. The troops were not trained to move in columns. And as a result, it turned out that they went out onto the road, but they didn't know how to go along it.

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The general state of the Soviet commanding cadres, their professional level, was very clearly reflected in their assessment of the experience of military operations in Europe. Evaluation of existing experience and conclusions drawn, lessons learned is the most important indicator of the level of professional culture. Evaluating the experience, both his own and someone else's, the specialist correlates the set goal, the methods chosen to achieve it and the result obtained from the point of view of the greatest efficiency.

In the spring and autumn of 1940, the People's Commissariat of Defense held meetings of the senior command staff of the Red Army to summarize the experience of the Finnish and the outbreak of World War II. In December of the same year, a similar meeting was also held by the People's Commissariat of the Navy. The materials of the conferences give a fairly complete picture of the level of professional culture of the officers of the Red Army and Navy. Representatives of the high command - from the people's commissar to the division commander - discussed the most important issues of the conduct of modern warfare - its nature, new features, manifested

in the course of hostilities in the West, the change in the role of the traditional branches of the armed forces - infantry, artillery, the importance of new means of armed struggle. Particular attention was paid to the experience of the war in the West. On the whole, the speakers and speakers in the debate correctly identified the foundations of German success and the causes of the defeats of the Western armies.

The Soviet generals accurately noted the increase in manoeuvres.

. Kumanev G.A. Next to Stalin: candid evidence. - M.: "Epic", 1999. S. 333-334.

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war, and the effectiveness of a massive
, the use of tanks in encirclement operations, and the threat of fighting by the enemy in air supremacy by means of a surprise attack on airfields in the very first hours of the war. The Commander of the Kyiv Special Military District, General of the Army G.K. Zhukov, highlighting all these features, drew attention to the effective use of sabotage groups by the German command: "An offensive operation, as a rule, was preceded by the advance development of a powerful network of spy agencies and sabotage groups ... Using the data of this agency, the Germans acted very often certain. Subversive groups in the rear terrorized the population, destroyed communications, killed important officers and seized the most important documents.

But the most unexpected conclusions were drawn from this. So, the commander of the district, Lieutenant General F.I. Kuznetsov, noting the role of German aviation, came to the conclusion that "the example of the war between Germany and Poland is not instructive enough (hereinafter, it is emphasized by me. - A.K.), because it is impossible to compare and take into account the Polish army as a worthy opponent of the German armies feminine forces. The same must be said about the army of France. In the speeches of other military leaders, it was likewise emphasized that the defeat of Poland and France contained little instructive for the Red Army, since we are talking about states with an old (!) social system.

In other words, the Soviet generals, having before their eyes an extremely instructive experience of defeating the Western powers, could not try it on themselves. Moreover, his own sad experience of the Finnish war was ultimately evaluated very rosy. Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army General

1 Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: On the eve of the war: Materials of the December (1940) Conference of the top command and political staff of the Red Army. T. 12(1). — M.: TERRA, 1993. S. 133.

: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: On the eve of the war: Materials of the December (1940)
Meeting of the top command and political staff of the Red Army. T. 12(1). — M.: TERRA, 1993. S. 200.

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Army K.A. Meretskov summed up a kind of result: "Fighting with the Japanese-Manchus on the river. Khalkhin Gol and the war with the White Finns showed the boundless devotion of the fighters, commanders and the entire commanding staff of the socialist Motherland, the party, the government and the great Stalin. This devotion and immeasurably high, strong political and moral training and the general morale of all personnel made it possible on the Karelian Isthmus, despite the harsh climatic conditions, in exceptionally difficult areas, representing natural and artificial barriers, to break through the Mannerheim line, which no one one army in the world did not consider it available for assault. The same idea was voiced in the closing speech of the People's Commissar of Defense Marshal S.K. Timoshenko: "The Soviet troops were the only ones who successfully broke through the modern defensive line - Mannerheim. The German troops did not break through, but bypassed the analogous Maginot Line from the north!"

The German experience was evaluated through the prism of its own achievements in the development of technical means of armed struggle. "Our views regarding the use of tanks turned out to be the most correct and were confirmed by the actions of German tank formations in Poland and in the West," Colonel General D.G. Pavlov. The Germans didn't invent anything new. They took what we had, improved it a bit and applied it?"

The general result was summed up by People's Commissar of Defense Marshal S.K. Timoshenko: "In terms of strategic creativity, the experience of the war in Europe, perhaps, does not give anything new. But in the field of operational art, in the field of front and army operations, major changes are taking place. Those. The blitzkrieg strategy, so brilliantly implemented by the Wehrmacht in campaigns against half a dozen European countries, did not make much of an impression on the Soviet generals. Soviet military leadership

¹ Russian archive ... S. 342-343. b There.
S. 254.
³ Ibid.S. 339.

The court could not even imagine that such a strategy could be directed against the Soviet Union, and, consequently, the key conclusion that this meeting was supposed to draw - about the urgent development of a set of measures to counter the blitzkrieg strategy - was never made.

The speeches of representatives of the high command of the Red Army revealed one more feature - a complete misunderstanding

difficulties in controlling the actions of a large mass of troops. Determining the scale of the offensive operation of the future, General of the Army G.K. Zhukov believed that it should be carried out on a section of the front 400-450 km wide, and the main blow would be delivered on a section of 100-150 km. "For such an operation, of course, a concentration of powerful forces and means will be required, and I think that for such an operation on such a front, about 85-100 rifle divisions, 4-5 mechanized corps, 2-3 cavalry corps and 30-35 aviation divisions will be required. . It goes without saying that such a number of armed forces must be comprehensively equipped with appropriate means of strengthening artillery, tanks accompanied by infantry, engineering and technical troops and appropriate means of control. Based on the regular strength of formations of that time, it turns out that the front commander had to concentrate only for his main attack on a front of 100-150 km about 1.1-1.4 million soldiers and officers, 4-5 thousand tanks, 3,600 —4,200 aircraft, not counting artillery and supplies! In other words, on such a small area it was supposed to concentrate forces equal to a quarter of the entire German invasion army of 1941, operating on a front of almost 2000 km, with all its tanks and aircraft. How it was supposed to solve the problem of secret concentration and deployment of such a grouping and, most importantly, the interaction of all its formations and associations, remained unknown.

The question of the expected timing of the start of the war also remained outside the discussion. In none of the speeches was there even a hint of the possibility of an early outbreak of war and the need to be ready to repel aggression today,

It was one of the many paradoxes of the meetings.

, Russian archive ... S. 135.

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One after another, the generals and admirals took the floor, quoted the speech of I.V. Stalin with a warning about the need to "Keep the gunpowder dry" and be ready to repel an attack at any moment. Almost everyone in his speech named numerous, often blatant, facts of unpreparedness for such actions, but no one even hinted at this discrepancy. The explanation for this paradox should be sought in the cruel lesson that the Soviet generals learned from the tragedy of 1937 - never, under any circumstances, touch politics, especially big politics. This was directly stated in his report by Admiral I.S. Isakov: "The task of the meeting is to discuss the main issues related to the conduct of operations and battles at sea, without deviating into strategy, and even more so into politics. [...] We do not set ourselves the task of making a deep assessment of all political and strategic problems. This work, firstly, is done by those who are in charge of it. be taken away, and secondly, it could lead us very far. Admirals and generals with varying degrees of readiness. and hunting gave up the desire to think, and even more so to undertake

mother something that at least somehow brought their actions closer to politics. The whole tragedy of this lay in the fact that the very type of activity of the high command staff of the armed forces involves direct involvement in strategy (the development of war plans, the construction and development of the armed forces, the direct deployment of troops on the border). And strategy is inextricably linked with politics, and big politics.

The situation that developed at the turn of 1940-1941 urgently required the discussion at these meetings of questions of a political and strategic nature - the development and implementation of urgent measures to prepare not only the armed forces, but the entire country for an imminent clash with Germany. But the state of the Soviet generals of that period, their level of professionalism made this impossible.

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Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: On the eve of the war: materials of meetings of the top management of the USSR Navy at the end of 1940. T. 12 (1-2) - M.: TERRA, 1997. S. 20-21.

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The historical chance given to the Soviet commanders was missed. A direct and now inevitable consequence of this was the shock that the Red Army command experienced in full measure when faced with the realities of blitzkrieg in the first hours and days of the war. There is only one reason for this amazing shortsightedness - the terrifyingly low level of professional culture of the Soviet generals. This was repeatedly noted by the participants of the meeting themselves. Head of the Combat Training Directorate of the Red Army, Lieutenant General V.N. Kurdyumov noted in his speech: "The command staff does little to improve their general cultural level and development. He reads military, political and fiction irregularly. He did not study enough the armies of potential opponents and the theaters of military operations. The experience of the war with the White Finns remained ungeneralized and unknown to the broad masses of the command staff, who did not take part in it.

One of the manifestations of the lack of professional culture was the assessment by the military leaders of the already mentioned question of the state of communications in the Red Army. Communication is the basis of management. After the loss of communication, organized struggle becomes impossible. The loss of communication is the prologue of a disaster. It was with the loss of communication that the catastrophic defeats of the Soviet troops in the grandiose battles of 1941 began. But the same pattern was also demonstrated during the defeat of the Polish and French troops in 1939-1940. Noting the importance of communications, the commanders of the Red Army associated its future not with radio facilities, as the most mobile and secure, but with their usual delegates of communications and wired telephones. Division commander, Major General S.S. Biryuzov proposed to make management "mobile and reliable

through command delegates. The commander gives the order, and the delegate sit down and go!" To protect the delegates, the general proposed creating special communication tanks with large viewing slots?. The most modern means

1 Russian archive: Meetings of the highest command and political staff of the Red Army ... S. 36.

? There. S. 238.

communications - radio was used, according to the commander of the Kyiv Special Military District, General of the Army G.K. Zhukova, "little and reluctantly. The adopted coding system leads to large distortions and confusion of the text and to a delay in the transmission of information. It is often quicker and easier to send delegates than to resort to radio transmission.

Against the background of numerous examples of the low level of combat training of the troops, the lack of experience and insufficient education of the officers, which together created a blatant picture of the Red Army's unpreparedness for war, the final assessment of the state of the armed forces was quite unexpected. |

From the speech of I.V. Stalin at an expanded meeting at the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (6) to summarize the hostilities in Finland, April 17, 1940:

"The question is, who did we defeat? They say Finns. Well, of course, the Finns won. But this is not the most important thing in this war. Defeating the Finns is not God knows what task. Of course, we had to defeat the Finns. We defeated not only the Finns, we also defeated their European teachers — we defeated the German defensive technique, we defeated the English defensive technique, we defeated the French defensive technique. Not only the Finns were defeated, but also the technology of the advanced states of Europe. Not only the equipment of the advanced states of Europe, we defeated their tactics, their strategy. The entire defense of Finland and the war were carried out at the behest, at the instigation, on the advice of England and France, and even earlier the Germans helped them a lot, and half of the defensive line in Finland was built on their advice. The score speaks for itself.

We defeated not only the Finns - this task is not so big. The main thing in our victory is that we defeated the technique, tactics and strategy of the advanced states of Europe, whose representatives were teachers of the Finns. This is our main victory."

Russian archive ... S. 146. s "Winter War": work on the mistakes ... S. 41.

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Assessing on the whole the preparation of the Soviet armed forces for war in 1939-1941, it should be noted that its results turned out to be extremely contradictory. In numerical terms, the Red Army has increased several times in these two incomplete years. The increase in the number of military equipment was impressive. However, behind the façade of the demonstrative power of tens of thousands of tanks, guns and aircraft lay a simple unpreparedness for war.

While preparing the armed forces for war, the Soviet ruling elite made a number of grave mistakes. The most important of them is a fatal miscalculation in determining the time of the clash with Germany. I.V. Stalin proceeded from the conviction that the war in the West would be protracted and Germany would get bogged down in a positional confrontation with France and England. (For the sake of justice, it should be noted that no one foresaw such a quick defeat of France and the completion of the campaign by Germany in the West.)

Convinced that the 1939 pact provided a long respite, the Soviet leadership begins to reorganize the armed forces. The scale of this reorganization, which required several years to complete, was the first in a chain of subsequent mistakes. The consequence of this first mistake was the entry of the Red Army into the war in a state of extremely low combat readiness due to understaffing and an incomplete training process.

Further. In the course of the reorganization itself, it was planned to create such a huge number of new formations (divisions and mechanized corps) that the Soviet economy was simply unable to provide this monstrous colossus with the necessary weapons and equipment over the next four years. The consequence of this miscalculation was the paradoxical fact that the Red Army, having more than 23,000 tanks, had only 5 out of 61 tank divisions fully equipped, while the Wehrmacht had about 7,000 tanks, but. all 20 panzer divisions were fully equipped.

! See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 83.

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In the same way, about 30% of the aviation regiments, all 100% of the airborne and mechanized corps, 100% of the anti-tank brigades of the RGK reserve, and all the fortified areas on the western border did not have time to complete the recruitment.

The second no less important mistake of the Soviet leadership was the excessive enthusiasm for the production of a large number of military equipment to the detriment of the means of support and repair. As a result, about 12% of combat aircraft, 20% of tanks and 25% of vehicles

mobiles, which were in service with the Red Army, turned out to be incompetent by the beginning of the war?.

The mistake of the top political leadership in determining the deployment of troops on the western borders had the gravest consequences. After the annexation of new territories to the USSR, the bulk of the troops of the western districts were redeployed to the new borders. This decision was made despite the objections of the General Staff of the Red Army and at the insistence of I.V. Stalin. The troops in the new places had to create the necessary infrastructure and basing system—to build roads, bridges, bases, storage facilities, barracks, airfields, training grounds, and so on. Due to the shortage of construction battalions, the personnel of combat units had to be involved in these works, tearing them away from actual combat training, which still remained at a critically low level. A very important circumstance that directly affected the combat readiness of the troops was the forced necessity for the troops of the western districts to carry out mobilization and resupply in new territories where the necessary ties with the local authorities and population had not yet been established. Taking into account the attitude of the local population towards the Soviet authorities, as well as the circumstances of the beginning of the war, it is easy to understand why the troops of the border districts at the beginning of the war could not fulfill this task.

The consequences of this mistake were extremely aggravated by the construction of a fortification line of long-term defense on the new frontier that had begun. And again, contrary to me,

See the Great Patriotic War ... S. 83.
? There. S. 85.

On the advice of the General Staff, which proposed limiting itself to rapidly erected field-type fortifications, Stalin instructed to urgently begin the construction of forts and casemates on the western border, refusing to use fortifications on the old border. Large-scale, extremely expensive construction swallowed up already limited funds, extremely slowing down the creation of infrastructure and the system of basing districts. As a result, neither one nor the other was ready for the start of the war - only a quarter of the planned fortifications were built, and the troops did not have enough to base the most necessary.

To crown it all, one more mistake was made in the recruitment of units and formations of the border districts - more than two thirds of the entire number of privates were soldiers of the first year of service, of which half were called up in the spring of 1941. This blunder was extremely aggravated by the inexperience of the subunit commanders. So, in the Kyiv Special Military District at the end of 1940, 87% of company commanders and 82% of battalion commanders had been in their positions for less than a year? Considering that the main time for tactical training of subdivisions fell on the summer period, these commanders no longer had time for training - six months later the war began. Inexperience of junior and middle commanders

link, an acute shortage of non-commissioned officers - all this had an extremely negative impact on the stability of the troops in the first hours and days of the war. This circumstance also explains the numerous facts of demoralization of the troops and open panic.

The Red Army needed a long period to finally bring the troops into a state of full combat readiness. Considering the trends and content of the restructuring process that began in the army after the change in leadership of the People's Commissar of Defense in May 1940, we can talk about three to five years of intense study and training of troops. In the described period

1 See The Great Patriotic War... S. 88.

? Russian archive: Meetings of the highest command and political staff of the Red Army ... S. 59.

od, even with the most optimistic assessments of the situation, it was absolutely unrealistic.

After the defeat and capitulation of France in June 1940, it became obvious that the situation had changed dramatically, and the expectation of a long peace break turned out to be wrong. Already in the summer of 1940, the Soviet military-political leadership could and should

, was to proceed from the fact that the army would meet inexorably approaching the war, without completing the process of reorganization and rearmament, the vast majority of new formations will not have time to complete the process of staffing and combat training, the newly appointed commanders will not have time to gain the necessary experience. It was necessary to urgently revise all existing plans for the deployment and use of the armed forces, based on their real situation. A new plan was needed for entering the impending war, a plan that took into account the real state of the army. But the need for this was not even realized by either the People's Commissariat of Defense or the General Staff, whose primary concern was and remains the task of developing plans for the entry of the armed forces into the war, regardless of the degree of completion of one or another of their reorganization. What this led to is evidenced by the numerous memoirs of the participants in the war.

From the memoirs of Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky:

"By the beginning of the war, the 9th mechanized corps was almost completely manned. There were still not enough weapons, and the training of people was not completed. But in the current situation, it was possible to fight with this composition.

The misfortune was that the corps was only called mechanized. I looked with bitterness on the campaign at our old T-26, BT-5 and numerous BT-7, realizing that they would not withstand long-term hostilities. Not to mention the fact that we had no more than a third of these tanks in the state. The infantry of both tank divisions did not have vehicles, but

since she was listed as motorized, she had neither wagons nor horses.

But, despite the difficulties, we did everything to gather our forces into a fighting fist and repulse the enemy, honestly fulfill our soldier's duty. However, recalling the past, I can now say that the directive of the General Staff did not provide for a variant of actions for the corps in the event that the war for it becomes in the formative stage, without military equipment and transport. And this should not be forgotten. The directive meant a full-blooded mechanized unit, provided for everyone to perform any combat mission.

We were compelled from the first day to make the necessary corrections.
Life forced! '.

Such questions in that situation could, were able to put only the highest political leadership of the country, more precisely, I.V. Stalin personally. But Stalin himself did not yet see the danger of an imminent fall of Germany and, most importantly, was confident in the fighting ability of the Red Army, despite all the alarming symptoms that emerged during the "winter war".

It seems that the demonstration of military power that the Soviet leadership staged in the late 1930s played a role here. |

From the memoirs of aircraft designer A.S. Yakovlev:

"When on May 1, 1936, the giants TB-3 (four-engine heavy bombers. - A.K.) sailed over Red Square, the rumble of hundreds of aircraft engines shook not only the air. It seemed that Red Square itself was trembling. Everyone was captivated by the majestic picture, and, like thousands of others invited to the parade, I looked at the sky and sincerely believed in the indestructible power of the Red Air Fleet, capable of ensuring "victory with little bloodshed and on enemy territory" in case of emergency. It was a demonstration of the power of our aviation industry ... We were then intoxicated by the appearance of the combat power of our aviation.

Frequent military parades, which became an indispensable attribute of the Soviet holidays of the 1930s, were called upon to establish in

" Rokossovsky K.K. Soldier duty. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1997. S. 40. ? Yakovlev A.S. The purpose of life. Notes of an aircraft designer. M.: Publishing house poly

literature, 1987. P.123.

the mass consciousness of the Soviet people the idea of the invincibility of the Red Army and produce a corresponding effect on potential enemies and allies. And if it was not possible to achieve this effect with respect to foreigners, as evidenced by

If there are analytical reviews of military attachés, then this confidence was undoubtedly instilled in the Soviet layman. Much more important was the fact that, in the end, confidence in the invincibility of their own military power was also strengthened in the minds of the Soviet military-political elite. This conviction blocked not only the possibility of realizing the true state of affairs, but also the last chance to take adequate steps to repel imminent aggression. The same faith in the invincibility of the "proletarian shield" and the irresistibility of the "red sword" made it possible to evaluate information about the approaching attack of Germany with great skepticism.

SOVIET SOCIETY ON THE EVE OF TESTS

By the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the USSR was the largest state of the federal type, which included 16 union, 21 autonomous republics, 9 autonomous regions and 10 national districts. The population of the country after the annexation of new territories reached almost 200 million people. The Soviet Union possessed the largest human resources among European countries, its capabilities exceeded the potential of Germany by more than two times.

What was the state of society on the eve of the war? As far as it was ready for the trials that fell for the Soviet people? How effective was the activity of the state in the moral and psychological preparation of society for war?

The readiness of Soviet society for war was determined by a number of factors, the most important of which was the purposeful activity of the state to prepare the country for war. The inevitability of war with the capitalist encirclement you Tekala from the ideological doctrine of the Soviet government, national

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committed to the world revolution. But the direct question of preparing for war arose at the end of the 1920s, after the banner of the "military alarm" of May 1927, which arose after the break in relations with England. The new foreign policy situation was characterized by I.V. Stalin at the Tenth Congress of the CPSU (6), emphasizing that the period of "peaceful cohabitation" with the capitalist countries is a thing of the past. It was during this period that the first steps were taken to purposefully prepare for the war, they were closely associated with the beginning of industrialization, and then, on its basis, with the technical re-equipment of the Red Army and Navy. Society gradually but inevitably got used to the idea of the inevitability of war. |

From the memoirs of the writer Konstantin Simonov:

"The fact that we will someday fight against fascist Germany

Mania, for me there was not the slightest doubt... people of my generation lived with a sense of the inevitability of a collision with fascism. Spain strengthened this feeling even more, but the pact with the Germans did not destroy it. Maybe for someone and destroyed - I do not know. For me and for my comrades, in the young literature of that time, it didn't, it didn't destroy it. It just seemed that it would be quite far from us, that before that there would be a long war between Germany, France and England, and somewhere later, in the final, we would face fascism. Such a course of our reflections was given by the pact. There was something soothing about it at first. The Finnish war, with all our military weaknesses revealed in it, made us think in hindsight about the pact as a greater good for us than it seemed to me at first. It was troubling to imagine, after the Finnish war and everything that had been revealed in it, that we—such as we were in the Finnish war in 1939—would not conclude a pact, but would face the Germans one on one.

Naturally, what happened in France (the capitulation of France in June 1940 - A.K.) only exacerbated this feeling and

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exacerbated many times. The fact that there is a war ahead - sooner or later - we knew before. Now we feel that it will not be sooner or later, but just about.

The emerging confidence in the imminence of war explained much in the perception of the Soviet people. According to the same K. Simonov, "thoughts about the inevitability of this war ... explained for me many of the difficulties of our life, and that rapid and intense industrialization of the country, of which we were witnesses and participants. In the same inevitability of war, we were looking for an explanation for the repressions of 1937-1938...". The implanted idea of the inevitability of war demanded action. The state channeled this energy into all sorts of forms. Various organizations were created - flying clubs, parachute and rifle sections - the largest of them was OSOAVIAKHIM - a society for the promotion of defense, aviation and chemical engineering - where hundreds of thousands of young people received military training. Initiated by propaganda, mass movements arose, similar to the movement of the "Voroshilov shooters", uniting young people who were trained in rifle shooting.

Propaganda of the need to be ready for a future war is gradually growing. All its means - the press, radio, cinema, theater, mass rallies and meetings - were used to prepare the population morally and psychologically for future trials. The most important part of this propaganda was the image of the war itself. Thousands of copies of books are published, films about the future war are released on the screens of the country. One of the most popular was the film "If there is war tomorrow", filmed in 1938 by director E.L. Dzigan. The film showed a possible scenario for a future war of the "union of fascist states" against the USSR. The war, of course, began with an attack

aggressors on the Soviet borders. But thanks to the selflessness and heroism of the border guards, the attack was repulsed, and

: Simonov K. Through the eyes of a man of my generation ... S. 86. - Simonov K. One hundred days of war. - Smolensk: "Rusich", 1999. S. 287.

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The troops of the Red Army, who arrived in time, struck back, transferring the fighting to the territory of the enemy. The treacherous attack on the Soviet Union provoked an uprising of the European proletariat against the fascist regimes and ended in a revolution. The troops of the Red Army defeated the aggressors within one or two days, while suffering minimal losses (only three people die on the Soviet side in the film). End credits of the film: "The first attack of the enemy received a crushing rebuff. This is how a war can begin, which will lead to the death of the capitalist world," summed up the results and fixed the main idea in the mind of the viewer - the coming war will undoubtedly be fleeting and necessarily victorious. In the public mind, this created clearly defined expectations and attitudes regarding the impending war. But in the situation of the dramatic beginning of a real war, these attitudes and expectations played a completely opposite role - a well-known effect of "unfulfilled expectations" arose, which, in turn, turned into a shock that struck the consciousness of the participants in the events of June-July 1941.

The attitude of I.V. Stalin for the film "If there is war tomorrow". As later recalled by the People's Commissar of the Navy, admiral N.G. Kuznetsov, "after receptions in the Kremlin in 1944-1945. (quite frequent one time) After an official dinner, Stalin liked to invite everyone to a small cinema hall and show one or two tapes. He loved watching movies! I remember that several times he demanded to play the film "If there is a war tomorrow". The war did not start exactly as in the picture, but he did not take this into account, and by 1944 the situation on the fronts was already good. Invited to the next screening, we asked each other: "What will the picture be today?" I.F. Tevosyan, with whom we often sat next to each other, with a sly smile, answered: "The newest one: "If there is war tomorrow."

1 Admiral Kuznetsov. Moscow in the life and fate of a naval commander. Collection of documents and materials. - M.: Publishing House "Mosgorarkhiv", 2000. S. 161. See: also: Golovanov A.E. Long-range bomber ... Memoirs of the Chief Air Marshal. 1941-1945. - M.: ZAO Tsentrpoligraf, 2007. P. 128.

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FROM THE TEXT OF THE SONG TO THE FILM "IF TOMORROW
WAR" (Text: V.I. Lebedev-Kumach, Music: D.Ya. Pokrass)

If there is war tomorrow, if the enemy attacks, if the
dark force comes,

As one man, the entire Soviet people will stand up for a
free motherland!

Chorus:
On earth, in heaven and on the sea

Our melody is both powerful and
severe. If tomorrow is a war, if tomorrow is a hike, Be
ready for a hike today! If there is war
tomorrow, the country will be stirred up From Kronstadt
to Vladivostok. The country will stir up, and it
will be able to make the enemy pay cruelly!

An airplane will fly, a machine gun will rattle, iron
tanks will rumble.

And the battleships will go, and the infantry will
go, And dashing carts will rush!

In the whole world, there is no such force anywhere,
To crush our country!

Stalin is with us dear, and with an iron hand Voroshilov
leads us to victory!

The second no less important idea of the propaganda of the 1930s. was the
glorification of the might of the Red Army, the formation in the minds of society of
the cult of its invincibility. "But from the taiga to the British seas, the Red Army is the
strongest of all!"

Another component of the image of the coming war is the proletarian
solidarity of the working people of the West, a kind of "fifth column" in the rear of the
imperialist powers, which is non-military.

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and: in the film, the last lines of the song sounded somewhat different: "And always, and everywhere
Stalin is with us dear / Marshal Voroshilov is with us." The song became very popular, and it was often
performed, but after K.E. Voroshilov was removed from the post of People's Commissar of Defense in
May 1940 and replaced by S.K. Dear Stalin, Timoshenko is a hero / Marshal Voroshilov is with
us." After the start of the war with Germany, the last line was changed once more: "We have a
fighting friend with us.

orRoshilov".

nice. It was assumed that the very proletarian nature of the Soviet state and its army would provide massive support for the population, and the emergence of the Red Army would lead to a social revolution. "Having taken the land from the landlords, give it to the peasants for all eternity; free of charge. With this slogan, - considered a contemporary, - we will blow up more than one army on the globe! The rooting of this image of a future war was greatly facilitated by the experience of local military clashes in the Far East, from which the Red Army emerged victorious, and especially the so-called "liberation" campaign against Poland in the autumn of 1939. the war turned out to be fleeting, victorious, with little bloodshed. And the complete absence of resistance by the Polish army made it possible to see in this the very "proletarian fifth column". The euphoria of such a massive success obscured numerous images of blatant disorganization, managerial confusion, and a mediocre lack of discipline. All this led to very palpable losses. According to official figures, during the Polish campaign, 1,475 soldiers and officers were killed and died and 3,858 were wounded. An important circumstance was the fact that German units were withdrawn from Lvov beyond the line of the Vistula and San rivers when the forward detachments of the Red Army approached the city. Enthusiastic contemporaries regarded this as recognition by the Germans of the Soviet military force: "Now, in front of the colossus of the Red Army, which exceeds the forces of Germany by three, if not more, times, many will step back"³. There was something to make the most sober head spin ... The victory in the "winter war" doubtful from the point of view of the created image of a future war and the stunning successes of the Wehrmacht in Western Europe left a crack in the brilliant

1 Cited. Quoted from: Tokarev V.A. Soviet society and the Polish campaign of 1939: "Romantic sensation of war" / Man and war. War as a phenomenon of culture / Under the editorship of I.V. Narsky and O.Yu. Nikonova. - M.: AIRO-XX, 2001. P. 411.

2 See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 187.

3 Cit. Quoted from: 7 Okarev V.A. Soviet Society and the Polish Campaign of 1939, p. 412.

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image of the coming war, but propaganda took countermeasures against excessive praise of German victories, while at the same time extolling the victory over Finland in every possible way. New books, plays, articles in newspapers appeared, and by June 1941 the old image of the war was restored.

An important role in preparing society for war was played by the mass repressions of the second half of the 1930s. Information about the arrests and punishment of "enemies of the people" necessarily emphasized their cooperation with the intelligence services of potential enemies of the USSR. The theme of the fight against spies and saboteurs has become a favorite in literature and cinema. The result of this large-scale campaign was the creation in society of a specific

the atmosphere of "search for enemies among one's own", which complemented the earlier feeling of a "besieged fortress" - the USSR being in a hostile capitalist environment. Spy mania, the search for pests and enemies of the people, on the one hand, really constantly reminded of the imminence of war, but on the other hand, they placed a heavy pressure on the everyday consciousness of Soviet people. Everyone could become a victim of a denunciation by an "over-vigilant" neighbor or colleague. The natural reaction to this condition was the need to prove one's loyalty. Not everyone was ready to become an informer, so for the majority, the best way was to participate in a real battle with the enemy. Along with a real desire to fulfill their international and patriotic duty, this motive became very widespread, bringing thousands of people into the ranks of volunteers who wanted to go to Spain, China, Mongolia to fight against "fascists and militarists", who asked to be sent to the army on the Far East, Poland.

The consciousness of any society initially strives for a state of integrity and unity. The split in public consciousness is the essence of a symptom of a deep disease of society. Therefore, the sin DRRom of the "enemy among one's own" had to be eliminated. The best and fastest means was finding an external and obvious enemy, which happened after the German attack. An explanation should be sought in the action of this factor.

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of that unprecedented patriotic upsurge that swept the country in the first days of the war. The scale and forms of its manifestation had obvious features of the elimination of this syndrome, which weighed so heavily on the consciousness of society.

But the impact of mass repression on society had a downside. The repressions, the scale of which is still the subject of discussion among specialists, affected a significant part of society. According to official data, as of March 1, 1940, the total number of prisoners in the 53 NKVD GULAG camps was 1,668,200! If we add to this number those who were shot and died by that time in the camps, repressed during collectivization and dispossession, resettled against their will in remote areas, suffered during the famine of 1933-1934, lost their jobs and their place of residence as a result all sorts of purges, as well as their relatives, it turns out to be a very impressive figure that cannot be accurately estimated, but in any case we are talking about many millions of people who had enough reason to be hostile to the Soviet state. The structure of this part of society was impassively recorded by an unknown informant: "God sends us war, maybe the government will change and life will be easier"? The percentage of obvious and potential opponents of the regime was especially high in the territories annexed to the USSR in 1939-1940.

This large part of the population of the Soviet country formed the social basis of collaborationism in the territories occupied

feasted by the enemy in 1941-1942. At the same time, one of their tasks was the terror of the 1930s. nevertheless fulfilled. Throughout the entire period of the war, despite the most difficult, catastrophic defeats at the front, there was no "fifth column" in the Soviet rear. The repressions destroyed all potential leaders of any kind of resistance to the Stalinist regime. Subsequently, it was this circumstance that served as a justification for the mass repressions of the 1930s.

1 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. M., 1998. S. 69. 2 Cited. Quoted from: Tokarev V.A. Soviet Society and the Polish Campaign of 1939

S. 403.

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From the conversation of V.M. Molotov with the writer F.I. Chuev:

"1937 was necessary. Considering that after the revolution we cut right and left, we won, but the remnants of enemies from different directions existed, and in the face of threats. the danger of fascist aggression, they could unite. We owe it to 1937 that we didn't have a "fifth column" during the war. After all, even among the Bolsheviks there were and are those who are good and devoted when everything is fine, when the country and the party are not in danger. But if something starts, they will falter, they will switch sides. I do not think that the rehabilitation of many military men who were repressed in 1937 was correct. The documents are hidden for the time being, with time clarity will be introduced. It is unlikely that these people were spies, but they were connected with intelligence, and most importantly, that at the decisive moment there was no hope for them. December 18, 1970"¹.

LJ

Ultimately, propaganda did its job - the Soviet people were not afraid of the war and were waiting for the war. This state of Soviet society contrasted sharply with what was happening at the same time in the public consciousness of Western countries, where fear and an acute unwillingness to war practically paralyzed active diplomacy "from a position of strength", paving the way for Nazi aggression.

For the most part, Soviet society was morally and psychologically ready for war, but... for what?! Victorious, on foreign territory and always with "little blood"! The reverse side of this readiness manifested itself already in the first hours and days of the war in June 1941. The depth of the shocks from the crushing defeat of the Red Army in the first weeks of the war was directly proportional to the degree of confidence of the Soviet people and especially the military personnel in the inevitable defeat of Germany in a few days and the victorious entry -

Institute of the Red Army in Berlin. Soviet military-political d

} Chuev F.I. Molotov: Semi-power ruler. — M.: OLMA-PRESS, 1999. S. 464.

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management made a huge mistake here. It prepared the Soviet people for another war! A direct consequence of this mistake was the profound psychological shock of the beginning of the war, expressed in a decline in the morale and discipline of the troops, panic in the cities, and so on.

And although the social base of Soviet power turned out to be far from monolithic, nevertheless, the majority of society really supported the regime, shared its ideology and values. In fact, it was this support that allowed the state to maximize the mobilization of the potential of society during the WAR.

PREPARATION OF THE SOVIET ECONOMY FOR WAR

The development of the Soviet economy on the eve of the Great Patriotic War as a whole was subordinated to one main idea - preparation for an imminent war. And the outbreak of World War II only intensified this trend. By the end of the 1930s, impressive progress has been made. In the three and a half prewar years alone, about three thousand large industrial enterprises were put into operation. During the years of the prewar five years in the USSR, entire industries—chemical, electrical engineering, instrument-making, aviation, and so on—were virtually anew. The result of the colossal expenditures and efforts of the Soviet people was the creation of a powerful economic potential.

The Stalinist regime, having created a super-rigid centralized system of economic management, controlling colossal natural resources and financial resources, having at its disposal a multimillion-strong army of workers, a powerful mechanism of forced labor, was able to concentrate the efforts of the entire economy, the entire society in the areas it needed. In the 1930s, military production became the sphere of this concentrated effort. In terms of growth in military spending, the Soviet Union was ahead of all the states of the world. In the second five-year plan of 1932-1937, increase in military production

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production amounted to 286%, while the growth of total production - only 120%.

The most important part of the preparation of the Soviet economy for the war was not the creation of additional areas of industrial production in the east. Already in 1940, industrial enterprises located beyond the Urals produced 18.2% of iron production, 21.4% of steel, 7.2% of coal production, 27.1% of iron ore, 5.2% of oil, 12.8% of % of electricity production?.

With the outbreak of World War II, a number of measures were taken to further the production of weapons. In September 1939, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (6) adopted a resolution on the reconstruction of existing and construction of new aircraft factories, which made it possible to increase production by one and a half times by the end of 1941. Similar measures were taken to increase the production of tanks, artillery systems, small arms?. Dozens of enterprises that previously produced peaceful products were transferred to the people's commissariats that produced weapons. The economy became more and more militarized. |

Working conditions in the industry also became tougher. On June 26, 1940, by decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the working day was extended to eight hours and the working week to seven days. Judicial liability was introduced for absenteeism and unauthorized departure from work. As a result of this decree, the duration of work of each worker increased by an average of 33 hours per month. Industry immediately received millions of additional workers. An additional increase in production was ensured by a general increase in output rates in industry.

The creation of a powerful military-industrial complex, the mobilization of the forces and resources of society allowed the Soviet state to achieve the highest level of arms production in the world. However, in this area, the Soviet leadership

The government made certain mistakes and miscalculations. —3—
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, See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. P.77.
Ibid.S. 78.

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There.

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The most important of these was the disproportion between the number of defense enterprises and the basic sectors of the economy. For a huge number of military factories, there were not enough machine tools, equipment, raw materials, materials and, most importantly, skilled labor. In the last pre-war years, the growth rates of steel production, oil production, and electricity generation slowed down. The deformed economy worked under great strain. The gigantic military industry with pain

with our labor, overcoming inertia, it was reorganized into the production of NEW types of weapons. It took great effort to master the production of complex types of products in instrumentation, electrical and radio engineering, and engine building. Disproportions were also allowed in the development of the branches of military production itself - weapons and ammunition, equipment and instrumentation. The production of vehicles and means of communication, repair and engineering support turned out to be clearly insufficient in comparison with the total mass of equipment and weapons produced.

LJ*

In general, the Soviet economy was prepared for war. The level of its development made it possible to provide the armed forces with the necessary amount of equipment, weapons and ammunition. The level of technical excellence was quite acceptable for its time. Features of the structure and control system of military production and the economy as a whole

allowed, if necessary, to sharply increase the number of produced equipment and weapons, which was demonstrated during the war. .

GERMANY AND THE SOVIET UNION ON THE LIFT OF THE COLLISION

In the last two months before the war, the most important events took place in the process of preparing both countries for a collision. Germany and its allies have completed the concentration and deployment of armed forces on the borders with the USSR. Soviet

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the leadership, in turn, took a number of measures to repel possible aggression. For both sides, these two months were decisive. The Wehrmacht was especially vulnerable during the concentration of its strike forces, and with each new day it became more and more difficult to hide the deployment of more and more new divisions in the east. For the Red Army, this was the last chance, when it was still possible to take emergency measures to avert the impending catastrophe.

The plan for waging war against the USSR, formalized in the form of Directive No. 21 "Option Barbarossa", was approved in December 1940. It was based on the ideas of the blitzkrieg, which were so effectively implemented by the Wehrmacht during campaigns in the West. The key ideas of the blitzkrieg were to achieve victory in the course of a short campaign, by completely defeating and destroying the main enemy forces in border battles. As in the campaigns in Western Europe, victory was supposed to be achieved not through overwhelming overall superiority in forces over the enemy, but through superiority in management and organization.

lowering the interaction of forces, their concentration in the directions of the main attack, and the speed of maneuver. The operational-tactical component of the blitzkrieg assumed the breakthrough of the front and the encirclement of the main enemy forces by the strikes of tank wedges in cooperation with aviation.

The blitzkrieg in Russia was to be carried out by three army groups, headed by experienced commanders: Field Marshal W. von Leeb - Army Group North, Field Marshal F. von Bock - Army Group Center, Field Marshal G. von Rundstedt - Army Group South. The "armored wedges" of the Wehrmacht were four tank groups of generals E. Göpner, G. Goth, G. Guderian and E. Kleist. Each army group had an independent strategic direction.

Two weeks before the appointed date, the concentration and deployment of German troops intended for the invasion was completed. There was a transfer of troops to the eastern border. carried out gradually, with observance of all measures of disguise and misinformation of the enemy. In the last ten days of May, the Reich railways were switched to an accelerated mode, their

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throughput increased three (!) times. From June 10, the troops intended for the first strike began to advance to the initial areas 7-30 km from the border. In total, the huge forces of Germany and its allies were concentrated for the invasion. The German forces in the east included 153 divisions and 3 brigades, three Luftwaffe air fleets with 4,170 tanks, 3,616 aircraft, and 40,500 guns. Finland allocated 16 divisions and 3 brigades (86 tanks, 3,500 guns) for the war with the USSR, Romania - 13 divisions and 9 brigades (60 tanks, 393 aircraft and 3,000 guns), Hungary - 5 brigades (81 tanks, 48 aircraft, 200 guns)'.

BATTLE COMPOSITION OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE USSR AND GERMANY, CONCENTRATED ON THE BORDER TO 06/22/1941

Personnel (million people)

Tanks and self-propelled guns
(thousand units)

_ Combat aircraft (tyesh) | 44
Imino thrower guns (thousands)

A feature of the grouping of German and allied troops was the uneven distribution of it. In the first echelon of the invasion, the main mass of troops was concentrated - about 80%, of which most - 70% of infantry divisions, 75% of guns and mortars, 90% of tanks and over 90% of aircraft - were

concentrated in the area between the Baltic and the Carpathians, which was only about 40% of the length of the Soviet border?. The purpose of such a deployment was to achieve a decisive, four to five times superiority in forces in the directions of the main attack. This superiority was a necessary condition for the implementation of the operational-strategic component of the blitzkrieg.

1 See Great Patriotic War... S. 112. ? There. P. 123.

`3 Ibid. S. 116.

The German command was able to concentrate on the Soviet border in a timely manner and prepare for the invasion a huge mass of troops and military equipment, and, most importantly, they managed to achieve the effect of complete surprise, which became an indispensable guarantee of a successful invasion. In itself, this fact is quite phenomenal, since already at the beginning of the 20th century, due to the growth in the number of armed forces and the size of the infrastructure necessary to ensure them, it was no longer possible to hide the preparation of the army for an attack.

What were the actions of the Soviet military-political leadership during these two decisive months? First of all, it must be noted that the Soviet leaders had no shortage of information about the intentions of the enemy. Shortly after the approval of Directive No. 21, its existence became known in Moscow, and three months later its main features were no longer a secret to Soviet intelligence. In February 1940, the Soviet leadership was aware of the beginning of the concentration of German troops in the border areas. As the date of the invasion approached, the mass of information about German preparations grew like an avalanche.

Contrary to popular belief about the complete inaction of the Soviet military and political leaders, certain changes were still made. In the spring of 1940, eight divisions and two brigades were transferred from the Far East to the west, and the urgent formation of 20 mechanized corps and 10 artillery antitank brigades of the High Command Reserve (RGK) began. According to the plan, these brigades were supposed to become an anti-tank defense reserve.

In May, the People's Commissariat of Defense begins the formation of an additional army as part of the Kyiv Special Military District and three armies of the second strategic echelon covering the border. In May-June, 800,000 people were called up under the guise of training camps. On June 12, 26 rifle divisions from the internal districts began advancing to the Tse border (only half of them managed to arrive at their destination before June 22). On June 19, the people's commissar of defense ordered the creation

front-line departments and their withdrawal to command posts. This already meant the beginning of the transformation of military districts into front-line formations, i.e. transition from the organization of peacetime to military.

However, in essence it was still half-measures. Thus, full mobilization provided for the drafting of 5 million people. and supplying 620 thousand horses to the kuvarmiya. Those divisions that were transferred to the west were not fully manned, had only 20-30% of vehicles, about 50% of tractors, which significantly limited their combat readiness. In any case, they could not resist the fully mobilized divisions of the Wehrmacht. Moreover, the hasty formation of 30 corps and brigades, given their grandiose staffs, only dispersed the already few trained command personnel, combat-ready equipment, communications and supplies.

cheniya.

The problem of readiness to repel an attack was extremely complicated by the deployment of formations of border military districts. The configuration of the state border was an uneven line that had two large projections towards Germany - Bialystok in the zone of the Western Special Military District (renamed the Western Front with the outbreak of war) and Lvovskiy ledge in the zone of the Kiev Special Military District (renamed South- Western front). A feature of the deployment of the Red Army units was the deployment of most of the army formations in these ledges. The 3rd, 4th and 10th armies were concentrated in the Bialystok ledge directly on the border and the 13th army in depth, in the Lvov - 6th, 12th, 18th and 26th armies. In the rear of these armies, at some distance from the border, there were strike reserves, the same "armored fists" - five mechanized corps (6, 13, 14, 17 and 20th) as part of the Western Front and eight mechanized corps (4.8 ,9,15,16,19,22,24th) of the Southwestern Front. Some of them were subordinate to the commanders of the armies, the rest were part of the front command reserve. |

This deployment of the Red Army in the border regions

' See: Great Patriotic War. S. 119.

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onakh allows a number of researchers to see in this evidence of the preparation by the Soviet military-political leadership of an attack on Germany'. However, there is another explanation for this as well. Firstly, army formations were simply located along the border in a linear pattern, as if flowing around it. On the other hand, the overhanging position of the strike forces of the Red Army, when the most powerful and best-equipped armies, reinforced by mechanized corps, were on the edge of the ledges, created excellent opportunities for a counter-strike against the enemy in the event of his invasion of Soviet territory. This was absolutely in line with the Soviet "retaliation" doctrine.

Ultimately, it depended on the Soviet command whether those very ledges would become the most advantageous springboards for devastating attacks on the enemy, or whether they would turn into giant cauldrons devouring dozens of Red Army divisions.

The situation in May-June 1941 required quick and decisive action from the Soviet top leadership. Quite feasible measures capable of limiting the damage from the already inevitable aggression depended only on the political will of I.V. Stalin. They envisaged either mobilization (albeit covert), or at least bringing the troops on high combat readiness in order to repel attacks. However, until June 22, Stalin refused to take such steps. Moreover, all measures proposed to him or measures taken at your own peril and risk met with a very tough rebuff.

In mid-May, at the direction of the People's Commissar of Defense, the General Staff of the Red Army developed a plan for delivering a preventive strike against German troops. The idea was remarkable for its extraordinary determination and scale. The author of the plan, Major General A.M. Vasilevsky, emphasizing that "Germany is currently keeping its army mobilized, with deployed

1 See Danilov V.D. Stalin's strategy for starting the war / Another war. - M.: RGGU, 1996. S. 136-157; Beshanov V.V. Tank massacre. - M., 2001., Meltyukhov M.I. Stalin's missed chance. M., 2000; Sokolov B.V. Unknown Zhukov. Minsk, 2000, etc.

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rear, it has the ability to warn (underlined in the text. - A.K.) us in deployment and deliver a surprise strike, "suggested" not to give the initiative to the German Command ... preempt (underlined in the text. - A.K.) about the enemy is deployed and attack the German army at the moment when it is in the deployment stage ... "To do this, it was necessary to carry out" covert mobilization of troops under the guise of training camps "and" covert concentration "on the border. 211 divisions and 47 reserve divisions in the second tier! But Stalin's reaction to the draft of this plan was very sharp. As Marshal G.K. Zhukov later recalled, "he really boiled when he heard about a warning strike on German troops ..."? It is difficult to say how events would have developed if Stalin had approved Vasilevsky's plan. Taking into account the extremely low level of training of the top and middle command echelons of the Red Army, the complete lack of experience in the massive use of strike forces and means, as well as the actual attempts of such strikes in the first days of the war, it can be fairly reasonably assumed that the implementation of the "Vasilevsky plan" is not only would end in disaster, but would also provide Nazi propaganda with an excellent justification for its own aggression. One thing is certain - under no circumstances can the Red Army prevent the enemy from delivering the first blow.

did well. The Wehrmacht was completing the redeployment and concentration of previously mobilized units and formations, and the Soviet troops had yet to complete this process, in a more covert form, which in itself increased the deployment time. And, finally, let us recall that the throughput capacity of the Soviet railways in the border areas was less than the German one by half. In fact, Vasilevsky's plan was utopian, and the very fact of issuing such an order by the people's commissar of defense, Marshal S.K. Timoshenko and Chief of the General Staff General of the Army G.K. Zhukov is talking about me

1 Cited. Cited from: Gorkov Yu.A. Was Stalin preparing a preemptive strike against Hitler.../ Another war. - M.: RGGU, 1996. S. 176-181. r Cited. Quoted from: Boris Shaptalov. The test of war. — M.: AST, 2002. P.35.

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hom. Either the high command of the Red Army did not have a true idea of the capabilities of the Red Army, believing that such a colossal task as the covert mobilization, concentration and deployment of 250 divisions on the border, was within their power, or the military leaders of the highest rank were engaged in an outright utopia. demonstrating to Stalin his service zeal.

More realistic in that situation would be the decision to take emergency measures to repel the attack through a prepared defense with the available forces. To do this, it was necessary to bring the troops of the border military districts to high combat readiness. This task did not require such large-scale measures as the mobilization of five million conscripts, and could be carried out in the shortest possible time, as was envisaged by the existing action plan in the event of a threat of war. However, until June 22, Stalin severely suppressed even this possibility.

Ultimately, the ability to repel an attack depended entirely on Stalin's political will, but the reason for his stern rejection of any measures was the leader's disbelief in the very possibility of a German attack. What was behind Stalin's stubborn unwillingness to believe the obvious facts? This is one of the questions that still occupies the minds of researchers and serves as the basis for all kinds of "interpretations".

In fact, this question is by no means simple. To answer this, it is necessary to reconstruct the totality of the most important factors that influenced the political decisions of the Soviet leadership. Chief among them was the course of the war in Europe. Germany was bogged down in the war against England, and a quick end to it became obviously impossible. In this situation, an attack on the USSR was tantamount to starting a war on two fronts, which for Germany would be akin to suicide. From this, Stalin drew a completely logical conclusion about the impossibility of an attack on the USSR in the near future, before the defeat of England.

This confidence of Stalin was not shaken even by numerous

nye intelligence reports about the intensive preparations for the invasion of NIA.
On one of these reports, Stalin left a resolution

BEHIND. Kilichenkov 65

tion: "This information is an English provocation. Find out who is the author of this provocation and punish him." This also had its own logic - it was England that the clash between Germany and the Soviet Union was extremely beneficial. But one should not forget that Stalin received information of a completely different kind. Numerous reports testified that Germany was not ready for a protracted war, and the Wehrmacht was not preparing for a winter campaign. To this should be added a real shaft of disinformation, covering up real preparations for the invasion.

Yet Stalin's conclusion was as logical as it was wrong. Hitler already tested this "illogical" scheme more than once. The attack on Poland, like the entire Polish campaign, took place in a situation not of a probable, but of a real war on two fronts. While the best and most prepared divisions of the Wehrmacht were crushing the Polish army, the French army, fully mobilized and ready for action, was standing on the Western Front, reinforced by the British Expeditionary Force. The probable danger of a "stab in the back" could not prevent the German invasion of Denmark and Norway in April 1940. In the summer of 1941, the threat of a real, and not a "strange" war on two fronts was incomparably less, because. France had already capitulated, and England, after the defeat on the continent, could not even think about active operations in Europe. And if we compare the danger of a possible "stab in the back" in the summer of 1941 from England in the event of an attack on the Soviet Union or a Soviet attack in the course of a protracted struggle with England, then Hitler's choice becomes quite obvious and even logical.

Some justification for Stalin's miscalculation can be a fact that scholars of the history of the Second World War still do not pay attention to. All campaigns of World War II, from the Wehrmacht attack on Poland on September 1, 1939, to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, followed the same scenario. All the victims of the attack had plenty of information about the impending aggression, but no adequate measures were taken. Obviously

. Cit. Quoted from: Boris Shantalov. Decree. op. S. 45.

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but that the same error mechanism was at work in all cases. Its essence is simple. The political leadership of a country, be it Poland, France, Belgium, the USSR or the USA, received through different channels two mutually exclusive streams of information - one about an impending attack, the other, which was basically disinformation, evidence of

vowed that there was no such threat. In such a situation, one had to proceed from a sequence of inferences in which the probable actions of the enemy were evaluated on the basis of logical constructions. And all of them, from the Polish government to the American administration, drew the same conclusion: an attack under such conditions is suicidal for the aggressor, and therefore impossible. Alas, in all these cases, the victims of aggression underestimated the adventurism of their opponents.

Yet this explanation cannot relieve Stalin of responsibility. Moreover, in a situation where he concentrated in his hands all the fullness of political and military power and most severely suppressed any attempts of independent action by anyone, the formula came into play - the fullness of power is directly proportional to the fullness of responsibility.

It was this absolute concentration of power, which in turn was the direct result of all Stalinist policies in the 1930s, that made it impossible for any significant measures to be taken to prevent a surprise attack. Marshal G.K. Zhukov described this situation in his memoirs as follows: "You need to really imagine what it meant then to go against Stalin in assessing the general political situation ... to say out loud that Stalin was wrong ... could then mean that before you even left the building, you you are already going to drink coffee at Beria's. It is not surprising that both Zhukov and Timoshenko, in fulfilling Stalin's demands, in turn severely suppressed the few measures that the district commanders tried to take in response to the actions of the German side. On June 20, a formidable telegram signed by the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army G.K. was sent to the command of the Baltic Special Military District. Zhu

Kova: "Without the sanction of the people's commissar, you gave an order for air defense on I

1 Cited. Quoted from: Danilov V.D. Stalin's strategy for starting the war ... S. 143.

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introduction of provision number two. It means to carry out a blackout in the Baltics... your order provokes various interpretations and makes the public nervous. I demand to immediately cancel this order, to give an explanation for the report to the People's Commissar!

The entire management system created by Stalin was built in such a way that the given order became absolute, not subject to any adjustment or interpretation. Moreover; any attempt to deviate was punished very severely. Stalin's attitude that a German attack was impossible, and that any attempts to increase the combat readiness of the troops could provoke this attack, led to the fact that even talk of a German attack was severely punished.

In order to make an independent decision in such a moral and psychological atmosphere, extraordinary courage and awareness of the entire measure of responsibility for

the fate of the country. A number of commanders nevertheless decided to carry out some measures. The commander of the Baltic District ordered to disperse aviation and put the headquarters of the armies, corps and divisions on alert, deploy communication centers. On June 19, tank and motorized divisions began advancing to the border. Commander of the 41st Infantry Division of the Kyiv District, General G.N. Mikushev, on his own initiative, put the division on alert.

But still, the absolute majority of commanders and commanders, despite all the signs of an approaching invasion, preferred to remain inactive, waiting for orders from above. Until June 21, Stalin refused to take any drastic measures to prepare to repulse the attack. But on the evening of June 21, additional information was received in Moscow, including from defectors, that an invasion would begin on the night of the 22nd. This time, Stalin allowed the People's Commissar of Defense to send a directive to the border districts to put the troops on combat readiness. However, contrary to the established procedure, according to which the troops were to be sent a short signal "Proceed to the implementation of the cover plan for 1941", Stalin orders Timoshenko and

1 Cited. Quoted from: Boris Shaptalov. Decree. op. S. 19.

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Zhukov to prepare a special directive, the original version of which he rejected: "It is too early to give such a directive now, maybe the issue will be settled peacefully," Stalin explained to Zhukov. — It is necessary to give a short directive, in which it is indicated that the attack can begin with provocative actions of the German units. The troops of the frontier districts must not succumb to any provocations, so as not to cause complications!

From the text of the NPO directive to the military councils of the border districts, June 21, 1941.

"1. During June 22-23, 1941, a sudden attack by the Germans on the fronts of the LVO, PribOVO, ZAPOVO, KOVO, OdVO is possible.

The attack may start with provocative actions.

2. The task of our troops is not to succumb to any provocative actions that could cause major complications.

At the same time, the troops of the Leningrad, Baltic, Western, Kyiv and Odessa military districts should be on full combat readiness to meet a possible surprise attack by the Germans or their allies.

3. I order:

a) during the night on June 22, 1941, covertly occupy firing points

fortified areas on the state border;

6) before dawn on June 22, 1941, disperse all aviation, including military aviation, over field airfields, carefully disguise it;

c) put all units on combat readiness. Keep the troops dispersed and camouflaged;

d) put the air defense on combat readiness without an additional increase in assigned personnel. To prepare all measures to darken cities and objects;

e) Do not conduct any other activities without special instructions.

Timoshenko, Zhukov?

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See Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. In 3 volumes. T.1. M: But Vosti, 1990, p. 370.

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Directive prepared by G.K. Zhukov, S.K. Timoshenko and approved by Stalin, was addressed to the command of the border districts. Its text reflected all the specifics of the atmosphere of the last pre-war days and the peculiarities of the Stalinist system of government. Directive No. 1 warned of a possible attack by German troops on the night of June 22 and ordered to be fully prepared to repel a sudden strike. However, Stalin's obsessive fear of provoking the Germans had an effect here as well. A paragraph was inserted into the text of the directive, setting the troops the task "not to succumb to any provocative actions that could cause major complications." This time, the usual Stalinist demand, dressed in the form of a direct order, was perceived quite differently. Now it was subject to strict execution. And if you put yourself in the place of the executor, then it is easy to imagine how this demand could be perceived in the field by commanders of all levels. There were a lot of questions. How to define provocation? What does the requirement "not to succumb to provocation" mean? And, finally, how to distinguish provocations "that can cause major complications" from all others?!

Other points of the directive raised no less questions. The requirement to disperse and camouflage all aviation during the night of June 22, 1941 was impossible under any circumstances - this required several times more time, and, finally, there were simply not enough pilots to complete this task - only 18% of them could fly at night, and there were no crews for almost 1,000 planes. In the same way, the requirement to disperse and camouflage the troops of the border districts in such a short period of time was impossible to fulfill. (Remember that it was

the shortest night of the year, and the directive in the troops could only be received by its end.),

The point that demanded "to meet a possible surprise attack by the Germans or their allies" remained completely unclear. What does "meet" mean? Guard of honor? Maybe reflect? And what allies? What, division commander

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See Andrey Mikhailov. Supreme Commander Examination
go//NVO, 1.10.1999

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must decide who can be an ally of Germany and who can not!

The last paragraph, which strictly prescribed "no other measures to be carried out without a special order," in fact, prohibited any initiative of the commander in repelling an enemy attack.

And if the demand not to succumb to provocations can be explained by the instructions of Stalin himself, his fear of provocations, which already went beyond the limits of sanity, then how can one explain the wording of the remaining points of the directive, written directly by professional military men? And it was signed not by Stalin, but by military leaders of the highest rank - People's Commissar of Defense Marshal S.K. Timoshenko and Chief of the General Staff General of the Army G.K. Zhukov. (By the way, G.K. Zhukov himself in his memoirs does not give any analysis of the content of this directive, but only complains that it did not have time to reach all units and formations of the army before the attack began.)

The commander has no moral right to demand from the subordinate the execution of an obviously impossible order, moreover, the commander himself is responsible for the execution of the order given by him on an equal basis with the subordinate. None of these rules were observed by the military leaders who drafted and signed Directive No. 1. A completely different old rule worked - if the wording of the order allows for the possibility of misinterpretation, then the order will certainly be misunderstood. The demand not to succumb to provocations during the first hours of the German invasion led to the most unimaginable reactions of the commanders. Thus, the 135th Infantry Division, which was part of the Southwestern Front, on the morning of June 22, NY, during the march, was subjected to massive attacks by German aircraft. But instead of the expected and quite understandable order: "Fire on enemy planes!" an order was received: "Do not succumb to provocations, do not shoot at aircraft"! It is easy to imagine what effect this order had on the morale of the division's personnel.

In the same situation, People's Commissar of Military E acted quite differently.

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See Andrey Mikhailov. Decree. op.

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Navy Admiral N.G. Kuznetsov. On the evening of June 21, he was summoned to the People's Commissariat of Defense, where Marshal S.K. Tymoshenko announced a possible German attack. Kuznetsov did not turn to Stalin for instructions, did not draw up a directive similar to that prepared by Zhukov and Vatutin. The admiral only gave the order to send the conditional signal "Ready No. 1" to the fleets and flotillas. In accordance with the system of operational readiness worked out even before the war, the fleets already knew what to do, and when German aircraft attacked naval bases, it was met with organized fire. In fact, directive No. 1 sent to the troops from Moscow was nothing more than an attempt by the high command to shift responsibility onto the shoulders of their subordinates. This attempt is the first in this war, but far, far from being the last. On the night of June 22, Stalin, Timoshenko and Zhukov took their first real test as a collective body of the high command - later it will be formalized as the Headquarters of the High Command - and no one passed this test!

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Returning to the questions posed at the beginning, we can draw the following conclusions:

A In the course of 1939 - 1941. preparation for the impending war became for the Soviet political and military leadership, in fact, the main goal of domestic and foreign policy.
tics.

And Using the full power of state power and the gigantic apparatus of propaganda, the political leadership headed by I.V. Stalin focused on this all the efforts of society, introducing into the mass consciousness the idea of the inevitability of an imminent WAR.

And the mobilization of the country's colossal resources made it possible to build a powerful military-industrial complex, create numerous armed forces and produce a gigantic

: For more details, see: Andrey Mikhailov. Examination for the Supreme Commander-in-Chief // NVO, 1.10.1999.

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the number of different weapons, surpassing in this all countries of the world.

And the moral and psychological readiness of society for war

No, the political stability of the state, a modern army of many millions, equipped with the latest military equipment - all this was the result of the realization of the advantages of the Soviet model of socio-political structure.

However, in practice, readiness for war turned out to be only part of another propaganda myth created by the system itself. Despite the colossal and many years of efforts of the entire people, the Soviet political leadership failed to create truly effective armed forces and prepare society for the real trials of the incoming war.

And the reasons for the unresolved nature of these problems lay in the nature of the Soviet model itself. The concentration of absolute power in the hands of I.V. Stalin inevitably turned society into a hostage of its mistakes and miscalculations. The same factor led to the fact that the political elite could not perform the functions of a "collective mind" that worked out adequate decisions and insured the leader's mistakes. The priority of relations within the framework of the leader-elite-society structure was aimed at solving a single task—preserving the absolute power of the leader. The priority of this attitude became an insurmountable obstacle to the solution of other tasks, including the task of preparing for war.

A common shortcoming, which greatly aggravated the situation, was the initially low cultural, educational and professional level of the military-political elite and Soviet society as a whole.

All these omissions and shortcomings had to be compensated during the course of the war itself, at the cost of many millions of victims and the terrible suffering of the people.

Part II

THE TRAGEDY OF 1941

On June 22, 1941, the Soviet Union was subjected to an unexpected, without a declaration of war, attack by Germany. The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people began, which became an integral part of the Second World War. According to the scheme established in modern Russian historiography, the following are distinguished. periods: [period: June 1941 - November 1942; P period: November 1942 - December 1943; PE period: December 1943 - May 1945 The war of the Soviet Union against Japan is considered as an independent and final period of the participation of the USSR in World War II. At the same time, this division of the history of the Great Patriotic War into periods is based on the course of the struggle for the strategic initiative in the war. During the first period, the German army as a whole had the strategic initiative, its command determined the direction and time of the main attacks, the Red Army had to fight large-scale defensive battles, retreating deep into Soviet territory. An attempt by the Soviet command to seize the strategic initiative during offensive operations in the winter and spring of 1942 failed.

The Wehrmacht re-launched a large-scale offensive on the southern flank of the Eastern Front. The command of the Red Army succeeded in turning the tide of the war and seizing the initiative in waging it only during the second period of the war, and from December 1943 until its end, the strategic initiative was already in the hands of the Soviet armed forces.

With regard to the events of the beginning of the war, it seems most productive from a cognitive point of view to consider the catastrophe of 1941 as a kind of moment of truth, which answered the question of how adequate were the ideas of the ruling elite about the impending war and

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how effective the whole policy of preparation for it turned out to be. At the same time, the events of the first period of the war reflected the activity of the Soviet system in the extreme conditions of the transition period from peaceful life to a state of war. It was during this period that the system began to realize its mobilizing potential, which in the near future made it possible to create the preconditions for a radical change in the war.

In this regard, it is also advisable to focus on what was the actual balance of forces of the parties at the start of hostilities. What role did objective and subjective factors play in the defeats of the Red Army? How justified and adequate were the actions of the Soviet leadership? How did they influence the course of events on the Soviet-German front? How did the features of the Soviet military-political system manifest themselves in the initial period of the war? How did the state of Soviet society on the eve of the war affect the development of events in its initial period? How was the country's potential mobilized in the interests of waging war?

In the previous chapter, it was noted that the preparation for war became the main, in fact, system-forming function of the Soviet regime, and the regime itself was maximally adapted to the needs of waging war. However, at the very beginning, the Soviet system was unable to develop the most effective solutions to repel aggression, which directly affected the scale and nature of the catastrophe of 1941.

DISASTER AT THE BORDER

On the night of June 22, the main blow of the German invasion army was inflicted on the troops of three border military districts (fronts) - North-Western, Western and South-Western. A little later, the formations of the Southern Front (former Odessa Military District) were also hit. Three groups of German armies acted respectively against them: "North", "Center" and "South". In general, the German troops did not have overwhelming superiority in any of the directions, and in the zone of operations of the Southwestern Front, a significant advantage was on the side of the Soviet troops.

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RELATION OF FORCES OF THE SIDES ON 06/22/1941

Personal so-t with. Orudian | (Forces
and means of becoming troops, and t ? | mortars,

Western Front 678 2189 1539 Army
Group 634.9 1677 "Center"s North-
Western
379.5 1274 1078 Front

655

Army Group North 1389 1070

front

Army Group "YUR" 730 799 772 Total in
the composition of the | |
boundary fronts. 2014.5 8246 4376 Red Army

Total composition of non-: |

German army on the Soviet border 2019.9 2998 3519
3

*

only serviceable cars are taken into account

Directive No. 1 was still being passed from the headquarters of the districts to units and formations, when at 3 hours 15 minutes German artillery opened fire along the entire line of the Soviet-German border, while hundreds of aircraft attacked military and civilian targets. Many cities were also bombed, among them Murmansk, Riga, Minsk, Smolensk, Kiev and others.

From the memoirs of Marshal G.K. Zhukov:

"The People's Commissar ordered me to call I.V. Stalin. I'm calling. Nobody comes to the phone. I call continuously. Finally I hear the sleepy voice of General Vlasik (head of the security department):

— Who is speaking?

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Comp. In: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Military historical

sky essays. - Book 1. M. 1998. S. 136, 148, 155.

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And

- Chief of the General Staff Zhukov. Please urgently connect me with Comrade Stalin.

- What? Now?! - the head of security was surprised. Comrade Stalin is sleeping.

- Wake up immediately: - the Germans are bombing our cities, the war has begun. h

There is silence for a few moments. Finally, they answered dully on the phone:

- Wait.

About three minutes later I.V. approached the apparatus. Stalin. I reported the situation and asked for permission to start retaliatory hostilities. I.V. Stalin is silent. I hear only his heavy breathing.

- Do you understand me? (Again silence.).

- Will there be instructions? I insist.

Finally, as if waking up, I.V. Stalin asked:

- Where is the commissar?

- Speaks on HF with the Kiev district.

- Come with Tymoshenko to the Kremlin. Tell Poskreba Shev to call all the members of the Politburo...

At 4:30 am, S.K. and I Timoshenko came to the Kremlin. All the summoned members of the Politburo were already assembled. Me and the people's commissar were invited to the office.

I.V. Stalin was pale and sat at the table, holding a pipe not stuffed with tobacco in his hands.

We reported the situation. I.V. Stalin said incredulously:

Isn't this a provocation of the German generals?

"The Germans are bombing our cities in the Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltics. What kind of provocation is this ... - answered S.K. Timoshenko.

"If you need to organize a provocation," said I.V. Stalin, "then the German generals are bombing their own cities too..." And, after thinking for a while, he continued:

this"!

The news of the beginning of the war turned out to be completely unexpected.

: Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. In three volumes. Volume 2. 10th ED. - M.: Publishing house APN, 1990. S. 8-9.

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for the Soviet leadership and caused obvious confusion. And this is quite understandable. Stalin's entire policy in the two years before the war proceeded from the impossibility of such a turn of events. All actions of the authorities, often absurd and unjustified, were aimed at not provoking this attack. And everything turned out to be in vain.

But if, nevertheless, we proceed from the fact that the entire Stalinist policy was dictated by the conviction that the country was not ready for war and the desire to delay its start at any cost, then Stalin's reaction should have been completely different. After all, if he really thought so, then the news of the attack should have caused not even confusion, but a real shock already in the first hours! And all subsequent actions had to be completely different, aimed at localizing the damage and, most importantly, gaining time to bring the country and the army into readiness for war. The best way for this is a tough defense on previously prepared lines, if necessary, a retreat in order to preserve combat-ready units and again buy time.

However, Stalin's actions were quite different. Soon after the official declaration of war by Germany, handed over by von Schulenburg, the ambassador in Moscow, when all doubts had disappeared, Stalin approved Directive No. 2 proposed by Timoshenko and Zhukov without any hesitation. This time, the troops were offered to "fall on the enemy forces with all their strength and means and destroy them in areas where they violated the Soviet border"! But only a few hours passed, and a new directive was sent to the troops. Its content turned out to be even more decisive. Directive No. 3 of the People's Commissar of Defense demanded the joint actions of the three fronts, the North-Western, Western and South-Western, to defeat the shock groups of the Wehrmacht and transfer the hostilities to the territory of Germany. Despite the objections and hesitation of the command of the fronts, Moscow insisted very strongly on the immediate implementation of this ambitious plan.

These actions of Stalin are in no way consistent with his convictions.

| Cit. In: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 498.

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I eat in the unpreparedness of the army for war. Rather, it looked like the fury of a deceived person, moreover, a person confident in his abilities: "Ah, if so, then we will show you now. On the whole, the first steps of Stalin and the high military command once again confirmed the fact that the Soviet leadership did not have an adequate idea of the true state of the Red Army and its real capabilities. And this circumstance played the most fatal role in the outcome of the border battle.

zheniya.

By the time Directive No. 3 was received, the troops of the three western fronts found themselves in a difficult situation, being taken by surprise, they were subjected to massive air strikes, artillery and enemy tank groups. The German troops managed to achieve surprise in all directions of strikes. This was especially evident in the zone of operations of the Western Front. When, at dawn on June 22, units of the 28th Rifle Corps came under powerful German artillery fire, its commanders simply did not believe in such a possibility and tried to signal "friends" with rocket signals, but this only led to increased shelling! The commanders of many other units, having fallen under fire and air raids, simply preferred not to take any action, fearing "to succumb to a provocation."

The very first strikes of the Wehrmacht disabled communication lines and command and control posts. The Luftwaffe's attack on Soviet airfields on the morning of June 22, during which more than 800 aircraft were destroyed, resulted in the most difficult consequences. Together with losses during air battles, only the Air Force of the Western Front lost 40% of its composition?. Already on the first day of the war, German aviation firmly seized air supremacy, which was decisive for the outcome of the battles of the entire initial period of the war. Constant and effective aerial reconnaissance allowed the German command to "look into the cards" of the enemy, revealing his plans in a timely manner. Assault strikes by German bombers disrupted

See Boris Shaptalov. The test of war. - M.: AST, 2002. P. 90. 2 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 137.

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the transfer of reserves and the advancement of Soviet strike forces to areas of concentration, destroyed communications centers and command posts, disrupting command and control. At the same time, German aviation was able to deploy a real "air umbrella" over its tank attack groups, which broke through the Soviet defenses, providing them with reconnaissance, cover and clearing the paths of a breakthrough. The conquest of air supremacy became the first and necessary condition for the next Wehrmacht blitzkrieg.

The loss of communication with higher headquarters led to the fact that the commanders of units and formations of the Red Army were forced to make independent decisions. And here it is said

all those shortcomings of the Soviet commanding staff, which were discussed above, were eliminated. Fear of responsibility, inability to make independent decisions forced the commanders to wait for orders from above. But there were no orders... The front headquarters, having lost contact with their formations, tried to restore it by sending those same communication delegates to the units. Numerous groups of German saboteurs were already operating behind the lines of the Soviet troops, whose task was to destroy wire communications and intercept messengers. Radio communication remained, but it was never mastered; the troops still did not know how to use it effectively. The problem of coding and protection of negotiations remained unresolved. Specialists of the German radio services easily found the direction of the work of the Soviet radio transmitters, determining the location of the headquarters from them, and aimed aircraft at them. For this reason, the command of the Red Army was very reluctant to use radio communications.

Taking advantage of the effect of surprise and the confusion of the Soviet command, the German troops captured almost all bridges across the border rivers Dvina, Dubissa, Bug. The capture of intact bridges became a kind of hallmark of the Wehrmacht's actions in the initial period of the war. The Germans succeeded repeatedly, which suggests a kind of regularity in this phenomenon. These facts were explained by the same fear of the responsibility of the Soviet commanders. When in an emergency situation,

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making an independent decision and not being able to contact the higher authorities, they, as a rule, preferred to wait, believing that inaction is still less dangerous for them personally than unauthorized action.

The capture of bridges across these rivers, which could be a serious obstacle; allowed the German command to immediately launch shock tank and mechanized units into the offensive. By the end of the day on June 22, the depth of advance of the German troops was from 20 to 70 km. Almost along the entire line of the state border, the German troops managed to break through the Soviet defenses and destroy the command and control system of the troops. It was at this time that the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 3 arrived at the headquarters of the fronts.

In a situation when the command of the fronts had not yet restored control, and intelligence had not yet revealed the composition of the German military groupings and, most importantly, the direction of the attacks inflicted by the enemy, it was not only senseless, but criminal to go on the offensive. In addition, the preparation of an operation of this magnitude required no less. 30-40 days.

From the memoirs of Marshal G.K. Zhukov:

"... General N.F. Vatutin said that I.V. Stalin approved the draft Directive No. 3 of the People's Commissar and ordered me to sign it.

What is this directive? I asked.

- The directive provides for the transition of our troops to counteroffensive operations with the task of defeating the enemy in the main directions, moreover, with access to enemy territory.

"The Nomes still do not know exactly where and with what forces the enemy delivers his blows," I objected. "Wouldn't it be better to figure out what is going on at the front before morning, and only then make the necessary decision?"

— I share your point of view, but the matter is settled.

"All right," I said, "put my signature."

And yet, on the evening of June 22, the troops began to use

' Zhukov G.K. Decree. cit., p. 14.

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\ denial of the directive. According to the intention of its compilers, it was planned using the mechanized corps that were in the reserve of the front command, attack the flanks of the German strike groups that had broken through into the depths of the Soviet defense, encircle and destroy the enemy. In fact, it was nothing more than a retaliatory strike against the aggressor, which exactly corresponded to the pre-war ideas about the beginning of the war: "An airplane will fly, a machine gun will rattle / Iron tanks will rumble / And battleships will go, and infantry will go / And dashing carts will rush"

Fulfilling the directive, the command of the three fronts threw into the offensive its main reserve - mechanized corps, the very "armored fists" on which so many hopes were placed. It was a colossal tank armada. The two mechanized corps of the Northwestern Front involved in the counterattack had 950 tanks against 600 German ones. The Western Front sent two mechanized corps with 1,265 tanks to the enemy's flank. The most powerful strike force was used by the command of the Southwestern Front - 5 mechanized corps, which included a total of 2,803 (!) Tanks (already during the battle, they were joined by another mech corps, which had about 1,070 tanks) against 4- German tank divisions, which had a total of 585 tanks (another tank division took part in the battle - 143 tanks)'. It would seem that the Soviet armored colossus should have simply crushed the German troops. But all three fronts suffered a severe defeat, in which the mechanized corps thrown into the counteroffensive simply ceased to exist.

Why and how this happened is easy to understand by the example of

actions of the 8th mechanized corps, Lieutenant General D.I. Ryabyshev. The corps was part of the Southwestern Front and by the beginning of the battle had 899 tanks. At the time of receiving the order for a counterattack, his divisions were already on their second march, following the order of the front headquarters. The idea of a counterattack made him once again change the direction of movement and again

1 See Vladimir Starostin. The largest tank battle /yir:// mind. yoK59.pagoda.gy/ueKapk.Nit

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start redeployment, then it all happened again. As a result of all this staff confusion, the divisions of the corps had traveled 480-500 km by the time they entered the battle, while combat instructions provided for marches to the battlefield no more than 40-50 km. Since the corps did not receive a single hour for the necessary maintenance, many combat vehicles had to be left on the roads. The marches of the corps were organized extremely ineptly. Instead of the seven traffic routes assigned to the corps, only two were allocated, which led to numerous traffic jams. To this must be added the fact that from the very beginning German aviation reconnaissance detected the advance of the corps, and right up to the area of concentration, it was subjected to continuous attacks from the air. There was no need to speak of any suddenness of his blow. As a result, the 8th mechanized corps entered the concentration area with only half of its tanks.

From the memoirs of General N.K. Popelya:

"... Ryabyshev turned around, picked up his cap from the ground, straightened his overalls and, with a somewhat solemn step, moved towards the lead car. Out of it came a short black mustachioed military man. Ryabyshev drew himself up:

- Comrade member of the Military Council of the front ...

The one to whom the commander addressed did not listen to the report, did not raise his hand to his temple. He was walking, crushing the shrubbery with his well-filled boots, straight towards Ryabyshev. When he approached, he looked up into the wrinkled high-cheeked face of the commander of Korius and asked in a voice choked with rage:

- How much did you sell for, Judas? ..

- You should listen, comrade corps ...

- You, a traitor, the field court will listen. Here, under the tree, we will listen and at the pine tree we will shoot...

I could not resist and stepped forward:

You can accuse us of anything. However, take the trouble

listen before. OI

: Andrey Mikhailov. Operational-strategic rush // NVO, 03/24/2000.

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"Ah, it's you, a staff lawyer for a traitor ..." Now a stream of curses fell upon me.

Everyone knew that a member of the Military Council could not stand being interrupted. But I had nothing to lose. I used his own weapon. It was not a conscious reception. Anger suggested.

"It is still unknown what considerations are guided by those who, by order, force us to give the territory taken to the enemy with a fight [...]"

- Who ordered you to give up the territory? What are you grinding? General Ryabyshev, report back.

Dmitry Ivanovich reports.

"The Corps will not be able to complete the regrouping until tomorrow morning.

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A member of the Military Council, out of indignation, says almost in a whisper:

- In twenty minutes, the decision - and forward.

What is "forward"?

"I order the offensive to begin immediately. If you don't start, I'll remove you from office, put you on trial..."

- A mobile group is being created as part of Vasilyev's division, Volkov's regiment and a motorcycle regiment. The main forces will finish their regrouping and will go into battle tomorrow.

"It would have been like that for a long time," the member of the Military Council looked at Dmitri Ivanovich from under his brows. - When they want to benefit the Motherland, they find a way ...

Ryabyshev is silent. Hands at the seams. The eyes are fixed somewhere over the head of the corps commissar. |

A member of the Military Council puts a narrow white hand to his cap.

- Do it. And Popel will command the mobile group.

The corps commissar turns to me:

- Take Dubno by the evening, get a reward. Do not take -

expelled from the party and shot ... "".

Due to the complete inability to organize and ensure the actions of such a mass of equipment, even the initially successful actions of some units ended in nothing. 6th mechanized corps

1 Popel N.K. At a difficult time. - M.: Publishing house AST, 2001. S. 137-140.

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Western Front, one of the few fully equipped, consisted of 1,022 tanks and also participated in the counterattack. However, his actions were paralyzed by German aircraft, maybe. the corps had absolutely no air cover. The lack of fuel and ammunition, which the rear services failed to deliver, forced the tankers to destroy their vehicles and retreat. By the end of the battle, only 50 vehicles remained in the corps ...

The retaliatory strike conceived in Moscow led to disaster. The formations of the Southwestern Front alone lost 2,648 tanks during this counterattack. The front has practically lost its tank reserves. Assistant commander of the troops of the Southwestern Front for tank troops, Major General V.T. Volsky reported to the head of the Armored Directorate of the Red Army, Lieutenant General of the Tank Forces Ya.N. Fedorenko: "...on | August, the Southwestern Front does not have mechanized formations in its composition as well-knit combat units ... ". The same fate befell the mechanized corps of the other two fronts. On July 15, the high command of the Red Army summed up the sad result of the "retaliatory strike" - the remnants of the mechanized corps were disbanded, their tank divisions were transferred to the army command. The outcome of the colossal tank battle on the border showed the following. The Soviet leadership, although it was able at a colossal cost. the efforts of the people to create a "smashing sword" of the Red Army - a grandiose tank armada, which served for many years as an adornment of military parades - was completely inept

wrestle with this "sword".

The failure of the massively planned counter-strike made the top leadership worry. By that time, the command of the Western Front had lost control of the troops. Commanding General of the Army D.G. Pavlov left his command post and went to the troops, there was no connection with him, find him

It didn't work.
SUMMER

, See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. pp. 139-140. ? Andrey Mikhailov. Operational-strategic rush // NVO, 03/24/2000.

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From the memoirs of a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (6) A.I. Mikoyan:

“On the seventh day of the war, fascist troops occupied Minsk, on June 29, in the evening, Molotov, Malenkov, Beria and I gathered at Stalin's Kremlin. Detailed data on the situation in Byelorussia had not yet been received. It was only known that there was no connection with the troops of the Belorussian Front. Stalin called the People's Commissariat for Defense Timoshenko, but he could not say anything good about the situation in the western direction. Alarmed by this turn of events, Stalin suggested that we all go to the People's Commissariat of Defense and sort out the situation on the spot.

Timoshenko, Zhukov and Vatutin were in the People's Commissariat. Zhukov reported that communication was lost, said that they had sent people, but no one knows how long it would take to establish communication. We talked quietly for about half an hour. Then Stalin exploded: “What kind of General Staff? What kind of chief of staff, who on the very first day of the war was confused, has no connection with the troops, does not represent anyone and does not command anyone?

Zhukov, of course, experienced a state of affairs no less than Stalin, and such a shout from Stalin was insulting to him. And this courageous man literally burst into tears and ran out into another room. Molotov followed him. We were all in a dejected state. After 5-10 minutes, Molotov brought Zhukov, outwardly calm, but his eyes were wet.

To correct the situation, a real “marshal landing” consisting of G.I. was sent to the Western Front. Kulik, B.M. Shaposhnikov and K.E. Voroshilov, reinforced a few days later by S.K. Timoshenko and S.M. Budyonny and a special confidant of Stalin - the head of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army L.Z3. Mehlis. As a result, all (!) Marshals of the Soviet Union ended up on the Western Front. But this did not save the front from defeat. The Wehrmacht's tank pincers closed in Minsk - on June 28, the divisions of the tank groups of G. Goth and G. Guderian came out towards each other. Surrounded

1 Mikoyan A.I. It was. Reflections on the past. - M.: Vagrius, 1999. S. 389-390. b

two armies of the Western Front were hit - the 3rd and 10th and part of the formations of the 13th army - a total of 26 divisions. Marshal G.I. Kulik fell into encirclement along with formations of the 10th Army. Only a small number of soldiers and officers were able to break out of the encirclement. According to German data, 116,000 soldiers and officers were taken prisoner, 1,964 tanks, 1,505 guns and 327 aircraft were captured as trophies. June 29 Army General D.G. Pavlov was removed from command, he was replaced by Marshal S.K. Timoshenko.

Soon the command of the Northwestern Front was changed in exactly the same way, but even here it was not possible to turn the tide of events. Having repulsed the counterattack of the mechanized corps, the German troops began a rapid advance deep into Soviet territory. And already on June 26, the tanks of one of the divisions, with the help of disguised saboteurs, captured the bridges across the Western Dvina. As a result, it was not possible to keep the enemy at this natural line. On July 8, the enemy approached Pskov.

After the capture of Minsk, the German troops continued to move east. Now their target was Smolensk. The Soviet command tried to detain them using natural barriers - the Berezina and Western Dvina rivers. But the main method of defense remained the same - the reserves, which were placed at the disposal of the front command, were directed towards the enemy one after another. The result of this technique was invariably depressing - the advancing German troops destroyed them piece by piece. And everything repeated again. As a result, on July 9, the formations of G. Guderian's tank group in the western direction reached the Dnieper.

The troops of the Southwestern Front, having lost 60% of their tanks during the counterattack, also began to retreat to the old state. NOY border, trying to avoid encirclement from the panzer divisions of General E. Kleist's Group, which broke through into the depths of the Soviet defense. They were rescued by the fact that the Germans clearly lacked one more tank group for effective encirclement radio operations. By July 11, German troops reached

approaches to Kyiv, where they managed to stop.

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See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 143.

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In general, the scheme of battles of the initial period of the war was as follows. The sudden strike of the German troops, which destroyed the control system of the western districts, led to the fact that the Soviet units entered the battles in an unorganized manner, often in isolation and almost blindly, since the front and army intelligence could not fulfill their tasks. The command of the fronts, unable to understand the situation and thoughtlessly following the directives from Moscow, threw their tank reserves into the counterattack separately, without proper training and support. The German troops, almost without losing the pace of their offensive, defeated the Soviet mechanized corps one by one and in two weeks reached the old state border of the USSR.

First results and conclusions. The initial period of the war was played by the Soviet troops. But in a strategic sense, its results also consisted in the fact that Germany failed to

implement the first part of the Barbarossa plan - to destroy the core of the Red Army in border battles. The defeat was inflicted only on the Western Front. The troops of the Northwestern and Southwestern fronts managed to avoid defeat and retreat to the line of the old state border. In addition, in the depths of the Soviet defense in the western direction, the German troops unexpectedly met with the second strategic echelon of the Red Army.

As a result, the enemy advanced 300-600 km deep into the Soviet Union, capturing a territory with a population of 23 million people - all of Latvia, Lithuania, almost all of Belarus, a significant part of Estonia, Ukraine, and Moldova. The Red Army suffered huge losses. Of the 170 divisions that met the enemy attack on the border, 28 were completely destroyed, 70 lost more than half of their strength. The total losses of the three Soviet fronts in the border battles amounted to 747,870 soldiers and officers, while two-thirds of them - 588,598 people - were irretrievable losses (dead and captured). The Red Army lost about 3,985 sa

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molets, 11,703 tanks, 18,794 guns and mortars. The losses of the Wehrmacht during the same period amounted to 77,313 people, 950 aircraft, 1,500 tanks, 1,060 guns?.

The losses of material reserves of the Red Army, mostly concentrated in the border districts, were also colossal. During the retreat, the army lost about 200 depots with fuel, ammunition, equipment. The Western Front alone lost 4,216 wagons of ammunition; the troops of the Southwestern Front destroyed 1,933 wagons of ammunition and 38,047 tons of fuel during the retreat. These losses caused for a long time an acute shortage of ammunition and weapons, when every projectile and every ten cartridges had to be counted and saved. The German army, on the tenth day of the war, covered one third of its fuel needs with trophies. Euphoria reigned among the German high command. On July 4, Hitler declared to his circle: "I try all the time to put myself in the position of the enemy. In fact, he has already lost the war.

So what were the causes of this disaster?

The most common explanation for such a catastrophic start to the war is the suddenness of the German attack. Stalin was the first to name this reason as the main one in his speech on November 6, 1941. But turning to the facts makes it possible to cast doubt on this traditional explanation of the causes of the defeats of the Soviet troops. First of all, for many units and formations the very fact of the attack was not unexpected. Thus, as early as June 18, formations of the Baltic Military District received an order to put them on alert and move to new areas of concentration. The order prescribed "parts to put on alert in accordance with the plan-

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: Calculated from: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century: Statistical research. - M.: OLMA-PRESS, 2001. S. 267-268, 484.

2 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. P. 165. Considering that the battlefield remained with the German troops, a significant part of the wrecked German tanks was subsequently repaired and returned to the Line, in contrast to the Soviet tanks that remained in the occupied territory.

b „Danilov V.D. Stalin's strategy for starting the war: plans and reality / Another war. — M.: RGGU, 1996. S. 151.

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we raise a combat alarm, but do not announce the alarm itself. Having the prescribed norms for portable and transportable supplies of food, fuel and lubricants, ammunition ... take with you only what is necessary for life and battle; to replenish the personnel of each unit. Recall immediately personnel from business trips and remove those who are on all possible jobs. Marches can only be made at night. In areas of concentration, carefully disguise and organize all-round security and observation. Disperse the troops to a company; establish reliable and fast communication with subordinate units in the areas of concentration"!. But even these timely measures did not change anything in the course of the struggle in the zone of the North-Western Front - its formations suffered a severe defeat in the first days of the war in the same way. In the same way, there was no surprise in the fall for the troops of the Southern and Leningrad fronts, where active hostilities began only in July and in the same way turned out to be extremely unsuccessful for them.

It was not so much the very fact of the attack that turned out to be sudden for the Soviet troops - in the end, a military man must be prepared for surprises - the scale of the blows turned out to be completely unexpected, shocking. Later Marshal G.K. Zhukov admitted: "A sudden transition to the offensive on such a scale, moreover, at once by all the forces available and deployed in advance in the most important strategic directions, that is, the nature of the strike itself, was not foreseen by us in its entirety. Neither the people's commissar, nor I, nor my predecessors B.M. Shaposhnikov, K.A. Meretskov and the leadership of the General Staff did not expect that the enemy would concentrate such a mass of armored and motorized troops and abandon them on the very first day in powerful compact groupings in all strategic directions in order to deliver devastating cutting blows. The Soviet generals did not even allow the thought that the enemy could go on the offensive with all his forces at once. As I recalled

1 Cited. by: Mikhail Khodarenok, Vladimir Slavin. The defeat was inevitable//NVO, 11/15/2002.

? Zhukov G.K. Decree. op. pp. 29-30.

Chief of Staff of the 4th Army, General L.M. Sandalov, on the night of June 22, the commander of the district, General D.G. Pavlov warned the army commander "that a provocative raid by fascist bands on our territory is expected that night. But he categorically warned that we should not succumb to provocation. Our task is only to capture the gangs.

I was struck by the nature of the blows delivered - powerful and amazingly accurate, with all their strength at once. The mobility of the German troops made it possible to deliver these strikes very quickly, choosing the weakest sectors of the enemy's defense, concentrating vastly superior forces on these sectors, and, if necessary, quickly changing the direction of the blows. Noting this feature of the actions of the Wehrmacht, Mark Blok, who participated in the hostilities of the French army in the spring and summer of 1940, noted: "The Germans conducted this war under the sign of "high-speed technologies"... The Germans advanced much faster than what we expected from them, and what the rules say. And so it was throughout the war.

But if for the French army such actions of the Wehrmacht really turned out to be absolutely unexpected and shocking, then for the Soviet troops this should not have become something new. It was precisely these features in the actions of the Wehrmacht that the participants in the meetings of the commanding staff in December 1940 paid attention to. But, as noted above, when analyzing the experience of the German blitzkrieg in Europe, the Soviet military leaders made a paradoxical conclusion - the Wehrmacht would not dare to use the strategy and tactics of blitzkrieg in a war against a country with an advanced socio-political system. Proceeding from this position, no measures were taken to counteract the tactics of the German army, which predetermined its amazing effectiveness in June 1941 in

But, perhaps, what was most striking was brought to automatic

. Sandalov L.M. Experienced. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1961. S. 92 / Military Literature [Electronic resource]. - Access mode: Pir://tiyega.No.ga/teto lizzap/zapaayuu1 Dpdeh. Wit

? Blok M. Strange defeat. Testimony recorded in 1940 Du / Per.s fr. - M.: ROSSPEN, 1999. S. 60-61.

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tizma interaction of heterogeneous forces - aviation, tanks, artillery, infantry. It seemed that not people, but a well-oiled mechanism dealt crushing blows one after another. The perfection of this mechanism was overwhelming.

It was this superiority of the Wehrmacht that caused the shock that was noted by many participants in the initial period of the war,

Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky, who met the war as the commander of the 9th mechanized corps of the Southwestern Front, repeatedly observed manifestations of this shock. "The unexpected blow inflicted by the enemy with huge forces and its rapid advance deep into the territory for some time stunned ... our troops. They were shocked ... There were cases when even entire units that fell under a sudden flank attack by a small group of enemy tanks and aircraft were subjected to panic ... Fear of encirclement and fear of imaginary parachute landings of the enemy for a long time were a real scourge!

The state of shock can also explain the "sabotage mania" that spread in the first days of the war. The German troops really skillfully and effectively (sometimes very effectively) used various sabotage groups, often dressed in the uniform of the Red Army, border guards and policemen, but their number was very small. However, rumors about saboteurs and paratroopers literally flooded the troops and the population of the border regions. This was largely facilitated by the local and even the central press, calling on the population to be vigilant. The result was a real epidemic that swept the troops and civilians. Documents of that time dispassionately recorded numerous examples of this: "An unknown commander stopped a car with the command staff of the headquarters, telling them that they were spies, and tried to shoot [them] ..." a group of employees of the State Security Department in the amount of six people was shot by a machine gun..."².

1 Rokossovsky K.K. Soldier duty. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1997. S. 35. ? Cit. Quoted from: Simonov K. One Hundred Days of War. - Smolensk: "Rusich", 1999. S. 321.

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It was the actions of the saboteurs who often fell into a panic justified their flight from the front line. One of the generals of the headquarters of the Southwestern Front, having witnessed the panic, tried to stop it. Stopping a truck full of soldiers, hurrying to the rear, he demanded an explanation, but instead of answering, the general was dragged into the back of the car and began to be interrogated, after which, declaring him a saboteur in disguise, they immediately sentenced him to death. The general managed to escape only because he managed to jump out of the car on the move.

The decline in morale and stamina of the troops was greatly facilitated by the lack of means of effective combat against German tanks and aircraft. Nothing has such a corrupting effect on the morale of soldiers as one's own impotence in the fight against the enemy. The colossal losses in tanks and artillery, along with pre-war miscalculations, left the Soviet troops without means of anti-tank defense, in fact, completely defenseless against enemy tanks, which eventually gave rise to the phenomenon called "tank fear". It was often sufficient

but just the news of the appearance of German tanks in the rear or on the flanks in order for entire units to leave their positions in a panic. The command, having no means of fighting, was forced to take measures that bordered on despair. Detachments of fighters were created in the units - tank destroyers armed with grenades and bottles of gasoline. A special instruction instructed them, after using up grenades and bottles, to prepare "mud-clay, which is thrown into the viewing slots" of tanks?. It is not difficult to imagine how much such instructions boost the morale of the troops.

. The demonstration of the overwhelming superiority of the German military machine, the inability of the Soviet command to organize an effective repulse of massive enemy air and tank attacks led to the demoralization of a number of units and formations of the Red Army and mass surrender. Columns of surrendered people stretched for kilometers in —_—o

I am Rokossovsky K.K. Decree. op. S. 36.

Cit. In: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 155.

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the captivity of fighters and commanders, in a state of complete prostration wandering to the west, became an indispensable feature of the first victories of the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front.

From the memoirs of the German doctor H. Killian:

"The gray mass is moving straight at us... What is approaching us turns out to be a herd of Russian prisoners of war. Yes, exactly a herd - there is no other way to call it. The population is about twenty thousand. They were captured during the last encirclement. A huge mass of people, weaving along a narrow road through birches and alders, comes closer and closer. They walk at a speed of no more than two kilometers per hour, unshakable and silent, moving their legs limply, like animals. Sometimes the shouts of the police are heard, here and there warning shots are heard to bring order to the ranks. There are only eight guards for twenty thousand prisoners. No one runs away, everyone keeps the herd. An eerie procession of ghosts of all ages passes us. Some are shaved bald and without hats, others have fur hats with earflaps on their heads. Many have only a uniform on their bodies, some in long Russian overcoats. All without weapons ... Some Russians separate from the general mass, run into the forest, look for some roots and plants there, stuff their pockets to the brim with them and run back again until the guards arrive. No one even thinks about running away. There is no end in sight to the procession. For almost an hour it stretches past us.

Still, the main reason for the defeats at the beginning of the war was the low professionalism of the command staff at all levels - from the platoon commander to the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. All the shortcomings of the Soviet commanding staff noted above were fully manifested. The main one is the inability to make decisions independently and the constant

1 Killian Hans. In the shadow of victory German surgeon on the Eastern Front. 1941-1943 / Translated from English. S.V. Babak. - M.: ZAO Tsentrpoligraf, 2005. S. 99-100.

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waiting for orders from above. In the context of the destruction of communication lines, this shortcoming of the Soviet military leaders turned out to be fatal. The Chief of the General Staff of the German Ground Forces, General F. Halder, assessing the actions of the Soviet troops in the border battles, wrote: headquarters. It seems that the Russian command, due to its sluggishness, will not be able to organize an operational counteraction to our offensive in the near future at all. |

And a completely different situation developed in formations headed by resolute and strong-willed commanders capable of initiative independent actions. There was no longer any room for panic, and the enemy met skillful and effective opposition. 99th Rifle Division Colonel N.I. Dementieva defended the city of Przemyśl until she received an order to withdraw. The 75th Rifle Division under the command of General S.I. acted brilliantly. Nedvin. Together with the Pinsk flotilla, Admiral D.D. Rogachev, she skillfully opposed the 53rd Army Corps of the Germans.

But still, most of the commanders of the Soviet formations proved to be far from the best. In fact, they still did not know how to command the troops entrusted to them, and they still had not developed the skills to control troops in modern combat. There was no complete understanding of the importance of organizing command and control, reconnaissance, and communications. The manner of commanding the troops of General D.G. Pavlov, who, having lost contact with the armies subordinate to him, instead of restoring this connection at any cost, left the command post and left for the troops, was quite common among the command staff of the Red Army. In part, this way of commanding troops was a legacy of the tradition of the Civil War, when the commander could not have been conceived otherwise than "the horse was ahead", but most often in this manner of commanding, a general distrust of subordinates was manifested - "without

they can't do anything to me." In addition, a trip to the troops, to the front

'Cit. by: Beshanov V.V. Decree. op. S. 360.

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voyu became a plausible pretext to avoid constant, for any reason, calls from Moscow, extremely unnerving commanders. |

The front and army intelligence of almost all Western fronts turned out to be extremely weak. Thus, the command of the Southern Front, proceeding from reconnaissance reports, structured its operations on the assumption that the enemy had 9-10 divisions, half of which were tank divisions (900-960 tanks). In fact, the enemy had 5 infantry divisions and 5 brigades and a total of 60 tanks. For a long time, reconnaissance could not establish the numbers, not only of the divisions, but even of the enemy armies operating in this direction. The connection remained out of hand. On June 26-27, during a counterattack by the mechanized corps of the Southwestern Front, units of the 8th mechanized corps reached the southern outskirts of Dubno. A few hours earlier, formations of the 19th mechanized corps broke through from the opposite side to Dubno. But the Soviet troops, who were ten kilometers apart from each other, could not establish communication with each other. As a result, the blow to Dubno failed.

The first directives of the Soviet high command, and especially Directive No. 3, also revealed a complete misunderstanding by Stalin himself of the entire complexity of organizing large-scale military operations. The formations, numbering tens of thousands of people, thousands of tanks and many thousands of guns, were tasked with redeploying, concentrating, deploying and preparing for a strike within a day (!), When such actions required at least three weeks. But, despite all the criminal illiteracy of the high command on the ground, these instructions were accepted for immediate execution. The command and control system created before the war continued to operate with the same efficiency, the lesson learned by the command of the Red Army in 1937-1938 was firmly learned.

People's Commissar of the Navy Admiral N.G. Kuznetsov characterized the main principle of the Soviet system as follows: "Stalin decided, the rest were left to act in accordance with this ... People who are accustomed not to act on their own

1 Arkhipov V.S. Time for tank attacks. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1981. S. 64-65.

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independently, but only to wait for orders and instructions from above, in order to carry them out without hesitation, will bring little benefit if a harsh hour comes. Fear of punishment and irresponsibility often live side by side. The work of the military apparatus in this case does not proceed according to plan, but, as it were, spasmodically, in jerks. Fulfilled one order and are waiting for the next

blowing. What if it doesn't arrive on time?

In fact, the very first experience of a clash between the Red Army and the German troops showed that the "Achilles' heel" of the Soviet military power is the command and control system created back in the 1930s. Stalin, using the methods of mass political terror, secured undivided power for himself. The command and control system of the armed forces was subordinated to the same goal. It ensured Stalin's complete control over the armed forces in peacetime, but turned out to be woefully inadequate for the needs of the belligerent army. Despite Stalin's obvious inclination towards military issues, on the eve of the war, the Soviet leader still did not possess a true understanding of the role and significance of the command and control system of the armed forces. In accordance with prewar ideas, the Headquarters of the High Command of the Red Army, formed on June 23, 1941, became the supreme body of strategic leadership. Marshal S.K. Timoshenko, members - I.V. Stalin, V.M. Molotov, Army General G.K. Zhukov, Marshal K.E. Voroshilov, Marshal S.M. Budyonny, People's Commissar of the Navy Admiral N.G. Kuznetsov. At the Headquarters, an institution of permanent advisers was created, which included a number of top military leaders and political leaders.'

But in this form, the body of the highest military leadership was extremely unsuccessful. Neither its composition nor its functions were determined before the war, so they had to improvise, and the time was completely inopportune for this. But the main thing all the same was the completely unreasonable choice of the head of the Headquarters. Stalin himself refused to head the new governing body, and Marshal Timoshenko, although he became commander in chief, nevertheless "I had to constantly coordinate all my decisions with Staba E:

in b See: Pechenkin A.A. The highest command staff of the Red Army during the World War II. — M.: Prometheus, 2002. S. 89.

4 A. Kilichenkov 97

line, which made it practically impossible to make the most important decisions on command and control of troops. In addition, the members and candidate members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Soviet Union (6) who were part of the Headquarters were not at all going to obey Marshal Timoshenko, but, on the contrary, demanded reports and reports from him, which completely disorganized the work of the Headquarters as a command and control body. The result of these ill-conceived decisions was that in the very first and important days of the war, the armed forces were left without a supreme governing body.

From the memoirs of the People's Commissar of the Navy, Admiral N.G. Kuznetsova:

"Indeed, before the war, the entire Soviet people was mobilized against any enemy, no matter where he came from to our homeland. The willingness to sacrifice oneself for the sake of the Motherland was proven in practice. We also had enough materiel, although the newer one did not reach the fronts by the beginning.

war. But what we didn't have was organization.

Now many people are trying to explain the "treacherous and sudden attack" of the Germans, but in fact this is not true. The organization of repulsing the "surprise" attack was so poor that if there were twice as many modern aircraft and guns on the front line as there were on the night of June 22, 1941, many would still die without proper counteraction. However, without the unity of actions of all branches of the armed forces, one could not count on more. For example, we, the sailors, could take a greater part in the battles on land directions"?.

Only on July 10, Stalin headed the Headquarters, and on July 19 he became People's Commissar of Defense. On August 8, a month and a half after the start of the war, the formation of the body of the highest military leadership was completed - the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command headed by Stalin was created. This unjustified delay in the formation of the supreme body of the military command was the result of Stalin's underestimation of the importance of questions of military organization and administration.

1 See: Pechenkin A.A. Decree. op. S. 90.

2 Kuznetsov N.G. Organization is the key to victory / Admiral Kuznetsov: Moscow in the life and fate of a naval commander. - M., 2000. S. 164.

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From the memoirs of Marshal G.K. Zhukov:

"From a military point of view, I.V. I studied Stalin thoroughly, since I started the war with him and ended it together with him. Before the Battle of Stalingrad, I.V. Stalin knew little about questions of military strategy and even worse about operational art. He was also poorly versed in the organization of modern front-line and, even worse, army operations.

At the beginning of the war, he tried to show his personal operational-strategic creativity, based on his experience during the Civil War, but Elk did not get anything good from this.

Before the defeat of the German troops in the Stalingrad region, he had a superficial understanding of the interaction in operations of all branches of the armed forces and branches of the armed forces ...

The big minus for the Supreme was that during the war he personally never visited the troops of the fronts and did not see the combat operations of the troops with his own eyes. He built all his conclusions on the basis of the reports of his deputies, the General Staff, the command of the fronts and special reports.

Under these conditions, absolute loyalty to Stalin, the main quality of a military leader brought up in the prewar years, was not enough. Quite different qualities were required - self-

diligence, initiative, responsibility and, of course, professionalism as a defining quality of a military leader's personality. It was necessary to urgently identify and promote such generals and, most importantly, to give them the opportunity to show their professional qualities. But Stalin preferred to act according to the tried and tested in the 1930s. scheme - there are failures, which means there are enemies inside.

From the decision of the State Defense Committee dated. 07/16/1941

"The State Defense Committee establishes that units of the Red Army in battles with the German invaders in most cases hold high the great banner of Soviet power.

' Zhukov G.K. Decree. op. pp. 107-108.

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and behave satisfactorily, and sometimes downright heroically, defending their native land from fascist robbers.

However, along with this, the State Defense Committee must admit that individual commanders and ordinary soldiers show instability, alarmism, shameful cowardice, throw down their weapons and, forgetting their duty to the Motherland, rudely violate their oath, turn into a herd of sheep, in a panic running in front of an insolent adversary..."

The blame for the defeat of the Western Front was laid on the front command and a number of army commanders. By a resolution of the State Defense Committee (GKO) dated July 16, 1941, the commander of the Western Front, General of the Army D.G. Pavlov, Chief of Staff of the Western Front, Major General V.E. Klimovskikh, Chief of Communications of the Headquarters of the Western Front, Major General A.T. Grigoriev, commander of the 4th Army, Major General A.A. Korobkov. Together with them, a number of generals of the Northwestern and Southern fronts appeared before the court. On July 22, exactly one month after the start of the war, they were shot. On the same day, July 16, by decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Red Army was for the third time after 1918-1928. and 1937-1940. the institution of military commissars was introduced, whose functions were to

| `Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 501-502.

2 I.S. Kosobutsky was sentenced to 10 years in prison. By the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of October 21, 1942, he was released ahead of schedule and sent to the active army. M.B. Salikhov was sentenced to 10 years in prison to be served at the end of the war. S.G. Galaktionov was sentenced to capital punishment. I.K. Eliseev until the end of the war was in the party

political work in the army. By the decision of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR of July 31, 1957 in relation to D.G. Pavlova, V.E. Klimovskikh, A.T. Grigorieva, A.A. Korobkov's sentence was canceled and the case was dismissed for lack of corpus delicti. On May 29, 1961, S.G. was also rehabilitated by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR. Galaktionov. The documents of the Military Collegium emphasized that the breakthrough of the German troops on the defense front of the Western Special Military District occurred due to the operational-tactical situation unfavorable for our troops and cannot be incriminated by the convicts as a military crime, since this happened due to independent from them to circumstances. (See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 501-502.)

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control over the activities of commanders and the morale of subordinates.

Perfected during the repressions of the 1930s. the system worked flawlessly - the perpetrators were found and roughly punished, loyal and reliable associates of Stalin were put in their place. Part of the fronts were united within the framework of strategic directions. Marshal K.E. Voroshilov, the most important - the Western direction was headed by Marshal S.K. Timoshenko (as a reinforcement, an army commissar of the 1st rank L.3. Mekhlis, who was quick to detect treason and immediate reprisal, was sent there), Marshal S.M. Budyonny received under his command the South-West direction.

The most important conclusion that Stalin made was the conclusion about the new nature of the war. It is not only a war between two armies. At the same time, it is a great war of the entire Soviet people against the Nazi troops ... "In other words, Stalin came to the conclusion that the forces of the Red Army alone are not enough to defeat the enemy, the efforts of the entire Soviet people are necessary, the mobilization of the potential of the whole society . The war must be waged both at the front, and at the rear, and on the occupied territory. In fact, Stalin's appeal became a call for the start of a genuine Patriotic War, in which the defeat of the enemy was to be the business of every member of society: "Our forces are incalculable. An arrogant enemy will soon be convinced of this. Together with the Red Army, many thousands of workers, collective farmers, and intellectuals are rising to war against the attacking enemy. The millions of our people will rise... All the strength of the people is to defeat the enemy!" '.

The aim of the Soviet leadership to mobilize the entire social potential and the measures taken in accordance with this turned out to be, of course, adequate and timely. Thanks to these measures, it was possible to carry out a mass evacuation of industrial

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1 1941. Documentation. In 2 books / Ed. A.N. Yakovlev. Book 2. - M., 1998. S.451--452 ..

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population, to militarize the entire economy, to mobilize and arm millions of new conscripts, to launch a mass partisan struggle in the occupied territory.

But all these measures could not prevent new catastrophic defeats for the Red Army.

THE SUCCESSES AND FAILURES OF THE BLitzkrieg

On July 10, a new stage of the war begins, which lasted until December 1941. Its main content was the attempt of the German army to realize the second part of the plan "Barba Rossa". General F. Halder defined its essence as follows: "When we cross the Western Dvina and the Dnieper, it will be not so much about defeating the enemy's armed forces, but about taking away his industrial areas from the enemy and not giving him the opportunity, using the gigantic power of his industries and inexhaustible human resources, create new armed forces! To this end, the Wehrmacht continued to deliver main blows in three strategic directions: Army Group North - in the northeast with the aim of capturing Leningrad, Army Group Center - on Smolensk and Moscow, Army Group South - the main goal Kiev.

Smolensk battle. The Moscow direction remained the main one for the German army. Using proven operational-tactical schemes of action, the command of Army Group Center still relied on its "armored wedges" - the 2nd tank group of General G. Hoth and the 3rd - of General G. Guderian. They received the task of rapidly advancing to the line of the Western Dvina and the Dnieper and not allowing the Soviet troops to create a new line of defense. On July 4-6, German tanks reached the indicated line.

By that time, the tank groups included 16 tank and motorized divisions. And here the German generals come to life

1 Halder F. From Brest to Stalingrad: Military Diary. Daily notes of the Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces 1941-1942 / Per. with him. - Smolensk: "Rusich", 2001. S. 48.

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gave unpleasant surprises. The Soviet command managed to restore the already practically defeated Western Front and organize defense along the line of the Dnieper and Western

Dvina. The new commander of the Western Direction, Marshal S.K. Timoshenko received at his disposal the armies of the second strategic echelon and additional reserves - a total of 7 armies, which included 66 divisions. True, only 37 of them managed to occupy the lines assigned to them, 24 of them were in the first echelon and 13 divisions in reserve. The balance of forces was generally on the side of the Soviet command. Everything now depended on how skillfully Marshal S.K. Timoshenko will be able to dispose of them.

The experience gained in frontier battles already quite convincingly testified that the Red Army was unable to compete on equal terms with the Wehrmacht in conducting highly maneuverable offensive operations. An attempt to follow the pre-war "retaliatory strike" doctrine resulted in the need for the troops to organize the most complex form of warfare - meeting combat. This type of combat is extremely complex due to its very nature - fleeting, maneuverable and intense, requiring two basic conditions for success - clear control and initiative. The higher the scale of such an operation (division - corps - army), the more difficult its organization turned out to be. In the context of the unsuccessful start of the war, it was urgently necessary to switch to a tough defense that exhausted the enemy on prearranged lines. The troops were to dig into the ground, create obstacles that were insurmountable for the enemy, and stubbornly defend themselves, only in some cases inflicting counterattacks on the enemy, when the success of the strike was guaranteed.

This was also required by the morale of the troops. The shock of the first defeats has not yet passed. Hundreds of thousands of unshot recruits entered the army, forming an idea of the enemy by rumors. In the mass of soldiers, the conviction in the absolute superiority of the enemy grew stronger, expressed in a simple formula: "Where can we go against them?! Europe" It was during this period that the troops were struck by "tank fear" - sometimes only the rumble

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engines on the flanks or in the rear put entire units to flight. The same was observed during massive artillery or air raids.

From the memoirs of General A.V. Gorbatov:

"... I saw a general disorderly withdrawal along the highway of a three thousandth regiment. Confused commanders of various ranks walked in the thick of the soldiers. Enemy shells occasionally burst on the field without causing harm. Getting off the car, I shouted loudly: "Stop, stop, stop!" - and after everyone stopped, he commanded: "Everyone turn around." Turning people to face the enemy, I gave the command: "Lie down!" After that, he ordered the commanding officers to come up to me. He began to find out the reason for the departure. Some answered that they had received a command transmitted through the chain, others answered: "We see that everyone is moving away, we began to move away too." A voice was heard from a group of soldiers lying nearby: "Look,

what kind of fire the Germans opened, and our artillery is silent. Others echoed this remark. It became clear to me that the first reason for the withdrawal was the impact of artillery fire on the unfired fighters, the second reason was the provocative transfer not from the order given by the senior commander to withdraw. The main reason was the weakness of the commanders, who were unable to stop the panic and themselves submitted to the elements of withdrawal.

There were many such examples in those days. In the first month of the war alone, special departments of the NKVD of the fronts and armies detained 103,876 servicemen on the roads, who lost their units and retreated in disorder? There was only one way to overcome this shock - success. It was success, albeit local, that was supposed to prove that the enemy can be beaten and that his invincibility is a myth.

But the new command of the Soviet fronts did not see the full need for changes in the methods of warfare. Marshal Timoshenko chose to follow the same doctrine of offensive war, according to which even defense must

' Gorbатов A.V. Years and wars. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1989. S. 167-168. 2 See: Mikhail Khodarenok. Prologue of the Vyazemsky catastrophe//NVO,

11/23/2001.

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be "active", i.e. offensive, built on powerful counterattacks. As a result, the entire battle of Smolensk resulted in a series of counterattacks by the Soviet troops, into which they were thrown by Marshal Timoshenko as new reserves came into his possession.

As early as July 5-7, the 5th and 7th mechanized corps were the first to deliver a counterattack. They had about 1,500 tanks and more than 500 guns in their composition against about 100 tanks and less than 350 guns of the enemy. It would seem that success was assured, but the Soviet tankers only managed to slightly push the enemy back. At the same time, more than half of the tanks were lost. The reasons for these losses remained the same - the command simply did not know how to use its forces. The tanks were thrown into the offensive without any reconnaissance and preparation, without air and artillery cover. The enemy opened the preparations for a new Soviet counterattack in time and prepared to repulse it. Two days later, the mechanized corps lost their combat capability and were actually defeated. An incomparably greater advantage could be obtained by placing these two corps on the defensive. Tanks dug into the ground as fixed firing points in tank-dangerous directions could give greater stability to rifle divisions. But then the Soviet command was simply not yet able to use tanks in defense. For tank units, only one type of battle was envisaged - an attack.

However, the command of the Western Front, under pressure from the Headquarters, continued to launch counterattacks. The German tank groups of G. Hoth and G. Guderian, together with the approaching infantry corps, using their advantage in mobility and reconnaissance, easily parried these blows and themselves went on the offensive. Tanks of the 2nd group. G. Guderian, moving to Yelnya, bypassed Smolensk from the south-west, while the divisions of the tank group G. Goth struck from the side of Vitebsk, covering

Smolensk from the northwest. There was a threat of encirclement of the main forces of the Western Front. The formations of the 22nd Army, thrown into the flank of the enemy, were dismembered and defeated in parts. The counterattacks inflicted by the 19th and 20th armies failed

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mi. German troops captured Smolensk on July 16. The formations of the 16th, 19th, and 20th armies were almost completely surrounded.

Trying to rectify the situation, the Headquarters transfers four more armies from its reserve under the command of Marshal S.K. Timoshenko - the 24th, 28th, 29th, 30th. On July 25, new counterattacks began. The surviving formations of the Western Front also participated in them. In total, five army groups participated in the counterattacks, attacking the enemy front. At the same time, a cavalry group of General O.I. Gorodovikov as part of three divisions. The greatest success was achieved by the formations of the 28th Army, Lieutenant General V.Ya. Kachalova, but they also failed to outplay the enemy in an oncoming battle. The army was encircled near Roslavl, its resistance was broken, General Kachalov died during a breakthrough from the encirclement.

At the same time, the resistance of the Soviet troops encircled near Mogilev under the command of General F.A. Bakunin. It was not possible to release the 12 divisions encircled in Smolensk, let alone liberate the city. The fighting in the encirclement continued until 5 August. Separate units from the encircled were able to escape from the ring, but the losses were heavy. In total, during these battles, the enemy captured 184 thousand prisoners, several thousand tanks and guns?.

The front was once again bled. But the Headquarters of the High Command still demanded to advance and advance. The same task was set - to defeat the strike group of G. Guderian and liberate Smolensk. This commitment of the Headquarters, or rather, Stalin, to offensive actions had

1 August 16, 1941, in the order of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, the name of General V.Ya. Kachalov was mentioned among examples of the shameful behavior of Red Army commanders: “The commander of the 28th Army, Lieutenant General Kachalov, being surrounded by the headquarters of a group of troops, showed cowardice and surrendered to the German fascists. The headquarters of the Kachalov group came out of the encirclement,

made their way from the encirclement of part of the Kachalov group, and Lieutenant General Kachalov preferred to surrender, preferred to desert to the enemy. Only in 1953 after the death of I.V. Stalin managed to restore justice in relation to General V.Ya. Kachalov.

2 See: Mikhail Khodarenok. Prologue of the Vyazemskaya catastrophe // NVO, 11/23/2001.

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deep roots. On the eve of the war, in his speeches, Stalin constantly carried the idea of the need for the Red Army to use precisely this type of action.

From the speech of I.V. Stalin to the graduates of the military academies of the Red Army in the Kremlin, May 5, 1941

„ “For the time being, we carried out a line on the defensive - until we re-equipped our army, did not supply the army with modern means of struggle. And now, when we have reconstructed our army, saturated it with equipment for modern combat, when we have become strong, now we must move from defense to offensive.

In defending our country, we must act offensively. From defense to a military policy of offensive operations. We need to reorganize our education, our propaganda, agitation, our press in an offensive spirit. The Red Army is a modern army, and a modern army is an offensive army.

The logic of the leader was quite obvious. The country, through colossal efforts, was able to create a modern army armed with the most modern technology. Actually, the main goal of the modernization of the 1930s. and there was the creation of such an army. Now it's time to justify all these efforts.

Unsuccessful attempts by the troops of the Western Front to carry out the directive of the Stavka continued until the end of the Smolensk battle. The only notable success was the liberation of Yelnya on September 8 by the troops of the Reserve Front under the command of General G.K. Zhukov. By that time, he had been relieved by Stalin of his post as Chief of the General Staff and sent to the front. Zhukov planned a classic operation to encircle 5 divisions in the Vel'ninsk ledge by a flank attack under the base of the ledge. However, it was not possible to surround the German troops - there were not enough forces. The Germans preferred to withdraw in time.

Only on September 10 did the Western Front finally receive a directive from the Headquarters to go over to the defensive. Complete the battle of Smolensk.

1 1941. Documentation. Book ... S. 163.

elk. The result of the incessant counterattacks of the formations of the Western Front was a slowdown in the pace of the German offensive against Moscow, in a number of sectors the German troops went on the defensive for the first time in the entire campaign on the Eastern Front. But the price for this very modest success was colossal. During the Battle of Smolensk, the total losses of the Red Army amounted to 759,974 people, of which 486,171 were irretrievable. During the fighting, 1,348 tanks, about 903 combat aircraft, more than 9,290 guns and mortars were lost. The casualties of the enemy were also significant. The irretrievable losses of the German army amounted to 50,000 men, 220 tanks, 1,000 guns and 150 aircraft.

However, an equally significant consequence for the Soviet troops was the fact that during the Battle of Smolensk the troops of the Western Front lost their trained reserves, the troops were extremely exhausted by incessant counterattacks and needed to restore their combat capability. It was necessary to urgently prepare a defense in depth in the Moscow direction, where the enemy was to deliver an inevitable blow.

Tragedy of the Southwestern Front. The transition to the defense of the German troops of the Center group in the Smolensk direction was explained not only by the fierce counterattacks of the armies of Marshal Timoshenko. The most important reason was the withdrawal from their composition of two army groups (one of them - tank) to strike at the Soviet troops of the Southwestern Front. Army Group "South" failed in accordance with the "Barbarossa" plan to destroy the Soviet troops in the border battle, their main forces managed to retreat to the Dnieper. However, on the southern flank of the Southwestern Front, German troops managed to encircle the formations of the 6th and 12th armies. The reason for this was the delay in the withdrawal of these armies to the line of the Dnieper. Both the Stavka and the headquarters of the front believed that the enemy was delivering the main blow to the east in the general direction of Kyiv, and these armies were tasked with flank attacks to delay the advance of the German troops. But the German formations were moving southeast, intending

1 Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 271-272, 484.

trying to cut off Soviet troops from the Dnieper. As a result, the 6th and 12th armies themselves were under the threat of encirclement. There was an opportunity to get out of the way, but this time the high command was not up to par. The troops were ordered to break through to the east, while in the southeastern direction there was still a 100 km gap not occupied by the enemy. In addition, in the midst of the fighting, the commander of the Southwestern Front, General M.P. Kirponos chose to give up control of both armies and transfer them to the Southern Front under the command of General I.V. Tyulenev. But also new

the commander could not understand the situation, preferring only to repeat the requirements of the Headquarters to withdraw to the east. As a result, on August 2, both armies were completely surrounded in the Uman region. At the time of the encirclement, they included about 130 thousand people, 384 tanks, more than 1000 guns and mortars. The opposing Wehrmacht troops had over 100,000 men, about 200 tanks, 3,000 guns and mortars. By August 7, the resistance of the encircled Soviet troops was broken. About 103 thousand soldiers and officers were captured, incl. both commanders of the armies, Generals P.G. Ponedelin, I.N. Muzychenko, four corps commanders and 11 division commanders?. The capture of so many soldiers and officers and, most importantly, 17 generals testified to the low morale of the troops. In terms of its scale, the catastrophe near Uman was comparable to the defeat of the Western Front, and Stalin again quickly found the culprits.

From the order of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command of the Red Army No. 270, August 16, 1941

Not only do our friends recognize, but our enemies are also compelled to admit that in our war of liberation against the Nazi invaders, units of the Red Army, their vast majority, their commanders and commissars behave impeccably, courageously, and sometimes downright heroically. Even those parts of our army that accidentally broke away from the army and hit

1 See: Great Patriotic War: 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 186. ? There. pp. 188-189.

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surrounded, retain the spirit of stamina and courage, do not surrender, try to inflict more damage on the enemy and leave the encirclement ...

But we cannot hide the fact that recently there have been several shameful facts of surrender to the enemy. Individual generals set a bad example for our troops...

Lieutenant General Ponedelin, who commanded the 2nd Army, having been surrounded by the enemy, had every opportunity to break through to his own, as did the vast majority of his army units. But Ponedelin did not show the necessary perseverance and the will to win, succumbed to panic, chickened out and surrendered to the enemy, deserted to the enemy, thus committing a crime against the Motherland, as a violator of the military oath.

The commander of the 13th Rifle Corps, Major General Kirillov, who found himself surrounded by Nazi troops, instead of fulfilling his duty to the Motherland, organize the units entrusted to him for a staunch rebuff to the enemy

and exit from the encirclement, deserted from the battlefield and surrendered to the enemy. As a result of this, units of the 13th Rifle Corps were defeated, and some of them surrendered without serious resistance ...

I ORDER:

1. Commanders and political workers who, during a battle, tear off their insignia and desert to the rear or surrender to the enemy, are considered malicious deserters, whose families are subject to arrest as the families of deserters who violated the oath and betrayed their homeland. Oblige all higher commanders and commissars to shoot such deserters on the spot

from the command staff.

2. Units and subunits that are surrounded by the enemy selflessly fight to the last opportunity, take care of the materiel as the apple of their eye, make their way to their rear of the enemy troops, defeating the fascist dogs.

To oblige each serviceman, regardless of his official position, to demand from a higher commander, if part of him is surrounded, to fight to the last opportunity in order to break through to his own, and if such a commander

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instead of organizing a rebuff to the enemy, a nickname or part of the Red Army will prefer to surrender - to destroy them by all means, both ground and air, and the families of Red Army soldiers who have surrendered will be deprived of state benefits and POWER ... "".

Having finished with the Uman cauldron, the troops of Field Marshal G. von Rundstedt reached the Dnieper. The first attempts to capture Kyiv failed, they had to go on the defensive. By that time, the offensive of the Wehrmacht had stalled in all three main directions - Leningrad, Moscow, Kiev. It became obvious to the German high command that it was not possible to attack in all three directions at the same time. In fact, it was a crisis of the blitzkrieg strategy. Plan "Barbarossa" gave the first crack. The way out of the situation that had arisen was found in a broad maneuver of forces and the concentration of the main efforts on one of the strategic directions. The German command decided to strike in a southerly direction against the troops of the Southwestern Front, which were dangerously hanging over the flank of Army Group Center. For this, the 2nd tank group of General G. Guderian, which was part of it, was redirected to the south, bypassing the troops of the Southwestern Front. In early September, its tank divisions, having crossed the Desna, went to the flank of the troops of General Kirponos. There was a threat of encirclement of almost the entire front.

The Soviet command discovered the emerging danger in time. And the Chief of the General Staff G.K. Zhukov, and the head of the direction Marshal S.M. Budyonny, and front commander M.P. Kirponos turned to Stalin with a proposal

I'm going to withdraw troops from the Dnieper. But Stalin took a very tough position - he did not want to hear about the withdrawal and abandonment of Kiev. Zhukov was relieved of the post of chief of the General Staff and appointed commander of the Reserve Front, Budyonny was replaced as commander in chief of the Southwestern direction by Marshal Timoshenko, General Kirponos was sternly ordered to stop thinking about retreat and stop the enemy with counterattacks.

Against the panzer divisions of the 2nd panzer moving south.

1 See: Great Patriotic... S. 503-504.

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groups were aimed at the troops of the Bryansk Front. The front commander, General A.I. Yeremenko swore to Stalin that he would "unconditionally defeat the scoundrel Guderian"! Indeed, Eremenko's troops, consisting of four armies and separate tank formations, represented a significant force, and, moreover, they occupied a very advantageous position on the flank of the 2nd Panzer Group. The troops of the Bryansk Front were to act jointly with the 40th Army, formed behind the rear of the Southwestern Front specifically to eliminate the threat of encirclement. Almost all of the remaining aviation was thrown against Guderian's tanks, for which the Stavka planned a special air operation. In total, 13 divisions and 7 brigades from the Bryansk Front and 2 divisions, 1 landing corps and 1 brigade of the 40th Army were sent against 8 German divisions? But all these measures were in vain. The counterattacks of the Soviet troops, resulting in a series of oncoming battles, did not achieve their goal. The reason for this failure was still the same - the complete inability of the Soviet command to organize the actions of such a mass of troops: formations entered the battles separately and not at the same time, it was not possible to organize interaction, there was still no communication between the troops. Guderian, with the help of only one corps, repulsed the Soviet attacks one by one, at the same time continuing to surround the troops of Kirponos. From the south towards him, sweeping away the Soviet barriers, the 1st Panzer Group of General E. Kleist advanced. In response to another appeal from the command of the Southwestern Front about the need for an urgent withdrawal of troops, Stalin sharply demanded "to conduct desperate attacks on the enemy's Konotop group in cooperation with Eremenko ... Finally, stop looking for lines for retreat, and look for ways of resistance and only resistance." But no orders or threats could save the situation. On September 15, the encirclement closed. On September 17, General Kir with diarrhea, without waiting for the permission of the Stavka to withdraw, gave

1 Cited. by: Beshanov V. V. Decree. cit., S. 422. ? There. P. 424.

3 Cited. Quoted from:

Zhukov G.K. Decree. op. S. 145.

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an order to the troops of the front to break through to the east. But it was already too late. In the ring were the forces of four armies - the 5th, 21st, 26th and 37th and separate units, in total over 452 thousand people, 2,642 guns and 1,225 mortars, 64 tanks.

In the course of the mass retreat that had begun, the front command was unable to organize the repulsion of enemy attacks. The front line of defense was dissected, and the Soviet troops began to break through the encirclement in small groups. In one of these groups, numbering about 1,000 people, was the front headquarters, headed by General M.P. Kirponos, but it was intercepted by units of the German Panzer Division and destroyed during a fierce battle. The front commander and most of the staff officers were killed, the rest were captured. A total of no more than 15 thousand people were able to break through the encirclement. The resistance of individual encircled groups continued until 26 September.

The battle for Kyiv ended in a grandiose catastrophe. The Red Army lost the most powerful of its fronts. During the Kiev defensive operation, Soviet troops lost more than 700,544 people, while irretrievable losses amounted to 616,304 soldiers and officers; during the fighting, the troops lost 411 tanks, 343 aircraft, 28,419 guns and mortars¹. A colossal gap of 200 km was formed in the Soviet defense. The scale of this catastrophe amazed even the enemy, but in just a few days he was surpassed near Vyazma.

In the course of the battle for Kyiv, Stalin made one of his gravest mistakes. The point was that even after two months of the war, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief still did not realize the true level of the combat effectiveness of the Red Army. He still relied on counterattacks, apparently unable to free himself from the obsessive image of the "strike back". Stalin still considered himself wiser and farsighted than his subordinates and still relied on the power of his orders and orders.

¹ See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 195. According to German data, the number of prisoners was about 665 thousand people, trophies - 3718 guns and 884 tanks.

[?] Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 270, 484.

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ny, remaining confident that it is enough to give a "hard" order to change the most unfavorable course of events. As a result, another exam for the title of Supreme Commander was failed. The cost of this failure was horrendous.

, Retreat in the South. Kyiv catastrophe of the South-Western

front opened the enemy the possibility of further movement to the south of the Crimea and access to the Don. At the end of September 1941, the Headquarters ordered the troops of the Southwestern Front (commander - Marshal S.K. Timoshenko) and the Southern Front (commander - Colonel General Ya.T. Cherevichenko) to go over to a tough defense. Particular attention was paid to strengthening the defense of the Crimea. But these measures came too late. Army Group "South" has already launched an attack on the Donbass, its "armored fist" - the 1st Panzer Army of General E. Kleist, having broken through the Soviet defenses, rushed to the south, deeply enveloping the flank of the Southern Front. On October 7, the encirclement closed around six divisions of the 9th and 18th armies near Meliopol. A few days later, individual units of the encircled armies managed to break out of the encirclement.

On the same days, in the western direction, the enemy launched a general offensive against Moscow and all Soviet reserves were thrown there. In the second half of October, the Headquarters ordered the troops of the Southwestern and Southern fronts to be led to the line of the Oskol and Seversky Donets rivers and to prepare the defense of Rostov. By the end of October, the Germans, having captured Kharkov and the Kharkov industrial region, the southwestern part of the Donbass, reached the approaches to Rostov.

The struggle for Rostov revealed the same inclination of the Soviet command to achieve its goals exclusively by offensive actions. Having received the new 37th Army at its disposal, the command of the Southern Front decided to launch a counteroffensive. The Soviet troops had superiority in artillery (almost three times) and aviation (one and a half times) with equality in the number of troops, yielding only in tanks (two times). The battles near Rostov took on the character of a meeting battle and, like near Smolensk, ended for the Soviet troops.

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failure. November 21, Rostov was captured by the enemy. The actions of the command of the Southern Front were affected by the same shortcomings - fear of initiative in making decisions, inept maneuvering of forces and means, inability to organize the interaction of heterogeneous forces.

At the end of November, having completed the regrouping, the troops of the Southern Front again launched an offensive against Rostov, bypassing the city from the northwest and south. As a result, the enemy, fearing encirclement, left the city and retreated to the line of the river. Mius, where the front line stabilized for a long time. The losses of the Soviet troops turned out to be very heavy - in the battles for the Donbass and Rostov from September 29 to December 2, the Red Army lost a total of 193,687 soldiers, of which 158,577 were irretrievable, the loss of equipment amounted to 143 tanks, 282 aircraft, 4,663 guns and mortars.

At the end of September, Army Group South launched an offensive against the Crimea. Being almost in the center of the Black Sea, the Crimea was a kind of "unsinkable aircraft carrier", allowing Soviet aviation to strike at the oil-bearing regions of Romania, the rear of the Army Group "South", and the navy.

Tu - to control the entire water area of the sea. The uniqueness of the Crimea was also in the extremely advantageous geography for defense - it was possible to break into the depths of the peninsula only through the Perekop isthmus about 30 km long and only 8 km wide, but after that it was necessary to pass the second isthmus - Ishunsky about 15 km wide, on which there were several salt lakes, which seriously impeded progress. By the beginning of the fighting, field-type defensive structures were built at the Perekop positions, which created excellent opportunities for conducting a long-term defense. In addition, there were plenty of forces for this. The task of protecting the Crimea was entrusted to the 51st Separate Army under the command of Colonel General F.I. Kuznetsov'. By the middle of October, the Primorsky Army of Major General I.E. Petrov, for 70 days she successfully defended Odessa, and only the threat to the Crimea forced her to leave

1 At the beginning of the war, F.I. Kuznetsov commanded the North-Western Front, but was removed from his post for unsuccessful command of the troops.

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city. As a result, under the command of General Kuznetsov, there were 12 rifle and 4 cavalry divisions, coastal batteries and the Black Sea Fleet.

The 11th German army under the command of General E. Manstein, which had only 6 divisions, was supposed to capture the Crimea. It seemed that the task of capturing the Crimea was impossible. But General Kuznetsov made a number of incredible, hard to explain mistakes. Of the forces at his disposal to protect the peninsula from the north, only 3 rifle divisions were allocated under the overall command of General P.I. Batov, of which only one (!) defended Perekop. The commander distributed the rest of the forces evenly over the entire floor of the island - the rifle divisions were deployed along the coast to repel the expected landing from the sea, and the cavalry

"divisions - in the center, waiting for the enemy's airborne assault. And although the naval command was confident in the impossibility of landing from the sea, General Kuznetsov remained captive to his fears. These actions of the commander could only be explained by the general atmosphere of confusion, depression and disbelief in one's own strength, as well as the complete absence of intelligence information. In other words, this was one of the manifestations of the shock experienced by the Soviet military command at the beginning of the war.

On September 24, Manstein launched an assault on the Crimea. After stubborn five-day fighting, the German divisions broke through the Perekop positions. Now that the direction of the actual enemy attack had been determined, reinforcements were urgently transferred to the Ishun positions, and as a result, 8 rifle and 3 cavalry divisions met a new enemy attack. After two days of fighting, Manstein's army broke through the Soviet defenses and began a rapid advance deep into the peninsula. Bid,

realizing; finally, how mediocre the leadership of the defense turned out to be, recalled General F.I. Kuznetsov. His further military activity did not work out.

From the memoirs of Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky: | "It was necessary that in the midst of the preparations for the operation [about the storming of the city of Sukhinichi in January 1942] he would come to us to replace

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front commander, Colonel-General F.I. Kuznetsov. Having settled down in one of the houses with his typist (there was no one else with him), he called me to his place. After listening to my report, he said in a raised tone that all the measures were worthless. They say, instead of uniformly reinforcing the entire strip occupied by us, we, by concentrating forces towards the Suhinichi, weaken other sectors, giving the enemy the opportunity to take advantage of this. I could not agree with him in any way and considered it my duty to report to the front commander by telegraph. He approved my decision, and ordered Kuznetsov to leave for the 61st Army ...

Curious information came to me regarding the "debut" of F.I. Kuznetsov, which I have already talked about after he visited us and was sent by G.K. Zhukov to the 61st Army. He, just as in the 16th, did not like the events carried out by the commander M.M. Popov. He reported on his claims by telegraph by the front. He immediately reacted to his report, ordering him to take command of the 61st Army. F.I. Kuznetsov, trying to avoid such an unexpected appointment, argued that M.M. Popov is able to rectify the situation after receiving instructions, but his arguments did not help him get rid of a more responsible independent position. And he had to take command of the 61st Army. But it turns out that Kuznetsov was not lucky here either, just as he was unlucky in the Baltic states and Crimea. In less than a week, the enemy went on the offensive and advanced up to 30 km in one of the sectors of the 61st Army. M.M. Popov again took command of the army, and F.I. Kuznetsov, in general, you were from the Western Front.

Vice Admiral G.I. was appointed the new commander of the Crimean troops. Levchenko. But the change of command did not save the situation. The Primorsky Army withdrew to Sevastopol, and the 51st to Kerch, from where its remnants were evacuated to the Taman Peninsula. In mid-November, the second heroic defense in the history of Seva Stopol began. The forces of the army and navy were combined into the Sevastopol defensive region under the command of

Rokossovsky K.K. Decree. op. pp. 167,169.

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scrap of the commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Vice Admiral F.S. Oktyabrsky. General I.E. became the deputy for land defense. Petrov. On November 11, the main forces of the 11th German Army launched the first assault on Sevastopol. But ten days of fierce fighting ended in nothing. Having suffered heavy losses, the enemy stopped the offensive.

On the outskirts of Leningrad. The smallest enemy grouping operated in the Leningrad direction. In mid-July, under the command of Field Marshal von Leeb, there were only 23 divisions that fought up to 500 km, they had to capture Leningrad, breaking the resistance of 33 Soviet divisions in three armies - 8, 11 and 27th. The troops of the North-Western Front withdrew to the Narva-Luga-Staraya Russa line and occupied the so-called "Luga defensive line" along the Luga River on the southwestern and southern approaches to Leningrad. The front continued to receive reinforcements. By the end of October, 17 rifle and 3 cavalry divisions arrived from the Headquarters reserve. 3 divisions of the people's militia went to the front. It is in Leningrad that the formation of such military formations begins for the first time. On June 27, 1941, at a meeting in Smolny, it was decided to form the Leningrad People's Militia Army (LANO). In mid-July, it consisted of three divisions, 6 separate units, 16 machine-gun and artillery units, a total of 52,700 people. But the real combat strength of this army was beyond all criticism. The militia formations lacked everything - weapons, ammunition, transport, communications, but most importantly - military training and experience. As part of the militia divisions, more than half of the volunteers had no military training and never fired. Platoon and company commanders did not know the tactics of warfare. But, as a rule, there was no time to prepare such compounds. They were thrown towards the enemy with the sole task of holding back his advance as far as possible. The fate of the divisions of the Leningrad people's militia, as well as

1 „Dmitry Dotsenko. Cannon fodder of a terrible summer //, at the NVO, 06/17/2005.

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formations in other cities was extremely tragic - they were enough for only a few days of fighting.

Von Leeb planned to overcome the remaining 300 km to Leningrad in just four days, but the enemy failed to break the Luga line. As usual, the German command preferred to outflank the stubbornly defending enemy. Actually, the whole tactics of the German troops was based on this. When meeting with a well organized defense, the German units began to search for weak spots in the defense, as a rule, these were the junctions of sectors of neighboring formations, weakly covered flanks, etc. After the discovery of such areas, the main forces were immediately transferred there, inflicting a powerful blow. This usually led to a breakthrough of the defense line and

exit to the rear of the main enemy grouping.

In full accordance with this tactic, the 4th Panzer Group of General E. Goepner tried to bypass the Luga line with the forces of the 41st Motorized Corps from the north and the 56th Corps from the south. But here, too, they met with stubborn resistance. Moreover, on July 14, the 11th Army of General V.I. Morozova struck at the flanks of the 56th Corps and surrounded its two divisions. For five days, parts of the corps, led by its commander, General 9. Mayshtein, fought surrounded. Later, Manstein himself admitted: "The next few days were critical, and the enemy tried with all his might to maintain the encirclement. For this purpose, he brought into battle, in addition to rifle divisions, two tank divisions, large artillery and aviation forces! The 56th Corps was saved from defeat by the divisions of the 1st Army Corps, which broke the encirclement. The actions of the 11th Army showed that if the troops have at least a few days to prepare the strike and, most importantly, air cover - the army's offensive was provided by 235 aircraft - success is quite real. But, alas, the proper conclusions were not drawn.

A new German offensive against Leningrad began in early August. Acting from Novgorod, on the southern flank of the Luga line, German troops broke through the line of defense and brought four divisions into the gap, of which two were tank divisions.

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Manstein E. Lost victories. - M.: Publishing house "AST", 2002. S. 205.

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But on August 12, the formations of two Soviet armies - the 11th and the newly arrived 34th - launched a counterattack and deepened 60 km into the rear of the entire Novgorod grouping. The Germans were forced to stop their advance on Leningrad and throw their reserves against the 34th Army. The Soviet troops could not withstand this blow, the army headquarters lost control, and a disorderly retreat began. As a member of the Army Military Council reported, she "was so demoralized that she ran erratically"! The army was defeated, losing 60% of the people and 80% of the equipment?. As in the case of the command of the Western Front, reprisals immediately followed. A commission headed by a representative of the Headquarters, L.3, left for the front. Mehlis, who quickly discovered the perpetrators. The commander of the 34th Army and the chief of artillery of the army were shot, the command of the front was changed. A number of commanders of armies and divisions, together with their chiefs of staff, were brought to trial by military tribunals.

But the repressions of the command staff of the Red Army units by themselves could not stop the enemy. By the end of August, the enemy approached Leningrad at 50 km, and on September 8 the city was blocked from land. The news of this infuriated I. Stalin, he removed Marshal K.E. Voroshilov from the post of commander of the troops of the North-Western direction, in

which he was only 7 days.

From the resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (6) on the work of Comrade Voroshilov K.E.

"Comrade Voroshilov did not cope with the assigned task and failed to organize the defense of Leningrad. Comrade Voroshilov made serious mistakes in his work in Leningrad: he published

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Acegero Stalin. Pages of political biography of L. Z. Mekhlis. M.: "Belfry-MG", 1999. S. 187.

2 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941--1945. Book 1. S. 201.

3 See: Rubtsov Yu.V. Decree. cit., pp. 189-190.

4 In the future, Stalin no longer trusted the "first Soviet marshal" command of the troops. In September-November 1942, Voroshilov acted as commander-in-chief of the partisan movement, in January 1943, as a representative of the Headquarters, he coordinated the actions of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts, in December 1943, the development of a plan of action for the Primorsky Army for the liberation of Crimea. .

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the order on the election of battalion commanders in the units of the people's militia - this order was canceled at the direction of the Headquarters, as leading to disorganization and weakening of discipline in the Red Army; organized the Military Council for the Defense of Leningrad, but he himself did not join it, this order was also canceled by the Headquarters, as wrong and harmful, because. The workers of Leningrad could understand that Comrade Voroshilov did not join the Defense Council because he did not believe in the defense of Leningrad; got carried away with the creation of working battalions with weak weapons (guns, pikes, daggers, etc.), but missed the organization of the artillery defense of Leningrad ... "".

General G.K. was urgently sent to Leningrad. Zhukov,

, who had just completed the operation to liberate Yelnya in the Moscow area. At this point, according to Zhukov, Stalin believed that Leningrad could be lost in a few days?.

But Zhukov managed to organize the defense of the city, sometimes using the most cruel measures. On September 17, he issued an order providing for the immediate execution of commanders, political workers and ordinary soldiers for leaving their positions without an order without permission?. All available forces were mobilized for the defense of the city, and the enemy was stopped. This was also facilitated by the fact that on September 17 Army Group North lost its main striking force - the tank group of E. Goepner was withdrawn from the battle and sent to Moscow.

Leningrad was saved, but remained in the blockade ring, which lasted until January 1944. The population of the city,

counting 2.5 million people, terrible trials of hunger, cold, disease, incessant shelling and bombing awaited. On the whole, the results of the hostilities in the Leningrad direction turned out to be very disappointing. The Soviet troops, having a constant overall superiority in forces, were unable to stop the enemy at any of the available defense lines and retreated to the outskirts of the city.

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Pechenkin A.A. Decree. op. S. 109.

? See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 202. 3 Ibid. p.203

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The losses of the Red Army and the Baltic Fleet during operations in this direction in July-September 1941 amounted to about 344,926 people, of which 214,078 were irretrievable, troops lost 1,492 tanks, 1,702 aircraft, 9,885 guns and mortars. General G.K. Zhukov played, undoubtedly, an outstanding role in organizing the defense of the city, it was after Leningrad that he. turns into a kind of "commander's ambulance" - Stalin sends it to those sectors of the front where the situation turns out to be supercritical. In October, such a situation arose near Moscow, the enemy was at the gates of the capital.

"TYPHOON" NEAR MOSCOW

In September 1941, after major successes in the northeastern and especially southwestern direction, the German command decided to shift the main efforts to the western direction in order to defeat the Soviet troops on the outskirts of Moscow, the subsequent capture of the capital and the victorious completion of the entire campaign in the Eastern front. Army Group Center's new offensive plan was given the code name Typhoon. The concept of the operation was ambitious and decisive. It was planned, by concentrating tank groups on the directions of the main attacks, to cut through the defenses and encircle the main forces of three Soviet fronts: the Reserve (commander - Marshal S.M. Budyonny), Western (commander - Lieutenant General I.S. Konev) and Bryansk (commander - Lieutenant General A.I. Eremenko) - in the areas of Vyazma and Bryansk. Particular attention was paid to the speed of action. Hitler planned to complete the defeat of the Soviet troops and the capture of Moscow before the start of the autumn thaw.

The last reserves of the German command were transferred to the disposal of Field Marshal von Bock. In total, there were 77 divisions in the Army Group Center, of which. 13 tank and 7 motorized - a total of about 1,800 thousand people, 1,700 tanks, 1,390 aircraft, 14 thousand guns and mortars. howl

1 See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 271, 484.

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The three Soviet fronts had 95 divisions and 14 tank brigades—1,250,000 men, 990 tanks, 667 aircraft, and 7,600 guns.

The German troops had the superiority in forces, but the number of Soviet troops was quite sufficient to organize a stable defense on previously prepared positions. Thus, the German superiority in forces in the Western Front was minimal - in the units of the Red Army there were 486 tanks, the Wehrmacht - 591, there were 4,028 and 5,651 artillery pieces and mortars, respectively? The creation of a defense in depth was greatly facilitated by a forced pause in the German offensive lasting almost a month. The Soviet troops had at their disposal a developed network of railways and highways around Moscow, which made it possible to carry out quick maneuvers of forces. The enemy, on the other hand, had to rely on transport communications destroyed during the hostilities, and besides, he had to "alter" the railway track, because. Soviet roads were wider than European ones. The Soviet aviation, which operated from concrete airfields, also gained a great advantage, its composition was reinforced by fighters from the Moscow air defense zone. German aviation had to mainly use field airfields in the conditions of the onset of mud.

But these and other advantages were not realized by the command of the Red Army. After two weeks of preparation, the German troops dealt powerful blows to the Soviet defenses. September 30 - by the troops of the Bryansk Front, October 2 - Western. The German command here also applied its favorite scheme. The blows were delivered at the junctions of the army defense, against which shock tank groups were directed under the cover of attack aircraft. Due to the secondary sectors of the front in the main directions, an overwhelming superiority in forces was ensured, which allowed the German troops to break through the front on the very first day.

'See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S.213.

? Mikhail Khodarenok, Boris Nevzorov. Black October 1941//NVO, 06/21/2002

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offensive and go into the depths of the Soviet defense. The enemy again achieved complete surprise.

The 2nd Panzer Group of G. Guderian (650 tanks) operating against the troops of the Bryansk Front, breaking through the Soviet defenses, deeply enveloped the troops of General A.I. Eremenko. Co-

Manding. The front tried to stop the advance of Guderian's tanks with a series of counterattacks. And again, everything repeated with a depressing sequence. The front reserves were scattered to the place of the breakthrough, being attacked by German aircraft on the march. Counterattacks were delivered without the necessary preparation, without the necessary artillery and air support. An avalanche of German tanks, supported by hundreds of aircraft, simply swept away scattered Soviet formations one after another and, without stopping, traveled about 200 km, then turned north, surrounding the main forces of the Bryansk Front.

The same thing happened at the same time on the Western and Reserve fronts. G. Hoth's 3rd Panzer Group and E. Göpner's 4th Panzer Group broke through the junctions of the defensive areas and, by the end of the first day, went into the depths of the Soviet defense. In the same way, front-line reserves were thrown towards them, but even here they failed to stop the German offensive. In the days when, far to the south, the tanks of General E. Kleist closed the encirclement stake near Melitopol, the tank spearheads of Hoth and Goepner deeply engulfed the main forces of the two Soviet fronts. On October 3 and 4, the front commanders Eremenko and Konev applied to the Headquarters with a request to allow a retreat to the rear defensive lines, but received a harsh refusal. And only two days later the departure was allowed. But the time was wickedly wasted. The withdrawal lines were occupied by the enemy. The encirclement ring is closed. In two pockets near Vyazma and Bryansk, there were 7 field directorates of the armies out of 15 available, 64 divisions out of 95, 11 tank brigades out of 13 and 50 artillery regiments of the RGK out of 64! The encircled troops fought fierce battles. Organized resistance lasted about a week. Then the encircled units began to make their way to the east

1 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 225-226.

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disparate groups. In total, no more than 85 thousand people managed to get out of the Vyazma pocket, and about 23 thousand from the Bryansk one. The irretrievable losses of the three Soviet fronts in the first half of October exceeded a million (!) people, of which only prisoners, according to German data, about 688 thousand! .

Three fronts ceased to exist at once, the gap in the Soviet defense was about 500 km. The roads to Moscow were open. It was the largest disaster on the fronts of World War II. In its size and consequences, it surpassed all previous and subsequent encirclements - both the defeat of the Southwestern Front in September 1941, and the catastrophe of the 6th German Army near Stalingrad.

Why did the picture of the breakthrough of the Soviet defense repeat itself exactly as it happened both in June and in July? It would seem that the Soviet military leaders in the three months of the war should already have gained the necessary experience and, having revealed the plan against

- Nika, repel German attacks. But that did not happen. Moreover, in October 1941, the Soviet troops suffered a catastrophe, the scale of which exceeds everything that happened before and after the Second World War. It is the extent of this defeat. forced to look for its causes in the very system of command and control of the armed forces.

The control system itself remained the same, and it was not a matter of its structure (it remained constant during the war), but in the relationship along the "vertical" - between the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, the General Staff and the fronts subordinate to them. The headquarters, more precisely, personally the Supreme Commander I.V. Stalin, as before, retained absolute control over the actions of the front commanders, who in this situation became mere executors of orders and instructions from the Headquarters and the General Staff. The degree of independence of the front commanders was minimal, and the entire experience of the first months of the war did not at all contribute to the desire of the generals to take the initiative. The brutal massacre of the command of the Western Front in July and subsequent repressions among the generals of the Red Army in August - October, restoration on July 16, 1941

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See: Great Patriotic

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the institution of political commissars who had the task of controlling the activities of commanders — all this clearly corresponded to the pre-war model of Stalinist administration, well known to Soviet military leaders in 1937. This model provided for only one type of behavior - complete subordination. Subordination and direct following orders from Moscow, no matter what.

It is not surprising that Generals Konev and Eremenko, like their predecessors Pavlov, Kirponos, Kuznetsov three months earlier, preferred to carry out the orders of the Headquarters exactly, contrary to the data at their disposal. By that time, front-line intelligence was already in a position to reveal the enemy's disposition and determine his intentions. The command of the Western Front received accurate data on the concentration

'turning by the enemy in the sectors of the 30th and 19th armies of 17 full-blooded divisions, which directly indicated the direction of the future strike. But the Headquarters was sure that the main blow would be delivered along the shortest straight line to Moscow, i.e. in the Smolensk Vyazma direction, and the commander of the Western Front, General I.S. Konev did not dare to defend his point of view before Stalin. The main forces of the front were concentrated where the Headquarters indicated and far away from the directions of the enemy's main attacks. Similarly, the commander of the Bryansk Front, General A.I. Eremenko, contrary to intelligence data, located his main reserves in the Bryansk direction, while the Germans concentrated shock groups to the south, creating a threat of coverage. These miscalculations allowed

the German command to achieve an overwhelming superiority in forces in the areas of a breakthrough - 5-8 times in terms of the number of manpower and equipment, with an overall superiority in forces of only 1.4-1.8 times.

When the directions of the attacks of the German tank groups were determined, it took up to two or three days to transfer front-line reserves to the place of the breakthrough. But German aviation this time did not allow to quickly and on time concentrate forces for a counterattack. As before, rifle divisions and tank brigades arrived in their starting areas separately, having suffered hard

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heavy losses from enemy attack aircraft, having neither adequate air cover nor time to organize an effective strike.

In a situation where the Headquarters and the General Staff retained full control over the activities of the forces. fronts, everything depended on their competence and diligence. But, alas, three months of the war did not add competence to the high command of the Red Army. Neither the Headquarters nor the General Staff succeeded in fulfilling their main task - to reveal the enemy's plan, to determine the directions of his main attacks, the composition of forces and the timing of the start of the offensive. As a result, the troops of the three fronts in the Moscow direction did not receive orders and instructions adequate to the situation. Moreover, a completely inexplicable miscalculation was made in the formation of troops. The forces of the Reserve Front, originally created as an echelon of a strategic reserve, were divided into three parts and were located on the flanks of the Western Front and in its immediate rear, which not only made it difficult to control them, but also fettered the possible maneuver of the forces of the fronts. The Headquarters did not fulfill its first task - organizing the interaction of the fronts, their commanders had no idea about the goals and objectives of their neighbors, which reduced the possibility of joint actions to zero.

Finally, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command could not give up its obsession with incessant offensive operations. The directives of the Stavka on the transition to the defensive front commanders, and only the Western and Bryansk fronts, received only on September 27, 2-3 days before the start of a new German offensive against Moscow. But even this directive ordered the troops to conduct private offensive operations in order to improve the configuration of the front line. Stalin's "offensive frenzy" simply did not leave time for the troops to organize a sustainable defense.

The actions of the high command turned out to be just as incompetent after the start of the German offensive on Moscow. The first strikes against the troops of the Western Front did not cause much concern. The fact that the enemy launched a decisive attack on the capital was learned at Headquarters from a report.

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niy German (!) Radio. By that time, communication with the Western and Reserve fronts had been lost, and the situation remained completely unclear. All the attention of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command and the General Staff was focused on the events in the Bryansk Front, where the Germans unexpectedly captured Orel. On October 5, like a bolt from the blue, a message from aviation intelligence of the Moscow District sounded that a large column of German motorized infantry was moving towards Yukhnov (120 km deep in the Soviet defenses), and there were no Soviet troops on their way. Headquarters simply did not believe it, and only after a three-fold recheck did the scale of the catastrophe become obvious. With the withdrawal of troops to the prepared lines of defense, the Headquarters was also catastrophically late, and when the advanced German units reached them, the Soviet troops simply were not there. Many days of hard work of many tens of thousands of Muscovites who built these lines of defense was wasted.

The Headquarters and the General Staff acted no better after the encirclement of the troops of three fronts. They could not organize the exit of the encircled units. Moreover; in a number of cases, tough orders from Moscow did not allow the troops to break through the encirclement. Thus, formations of the 50th Army of the Bryansk Front, having discovered gaps in the encirclement ring to the northeast of Bryansk, began a successful breakthrough, but the directive of the General Staff demanded that the direction of movement be changed to the southeast, where tank operations were supposed to provide a way out of the encirclement. connections. But it was there that a powerful enemy grouping was concentrated. Army commander General M.P. Petrov did not dare to disobey the order, deployed parts of the army in a new direction. But it was not possible to break through the enemy's ring either from the inside or from the outside. The 50th Army was dissected by oncoming blows and destroyed along with the command. A similar fate befell the other armies of the Western, Reserve and Bryansk fronts. Everywhere the same thing was repeated - the groupings of the fronts broke up into separate pockets of resistance, which were destroyed by the enemy in parts.

During the October catastrophe, one of the regularities of the actions of the Soviet troops in the environment was most clearly manifested.

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research institutes. Despite the large number of surrounded troops near Minsk, Uman, Kiev, Vyazma, Bryansk - up to several hundred thousand people and a large amount of equipment - hundreds and thousands of guns, tanks and aircraft, organized resistance lasted no more than 7-8 days. The enemy, on the contrary, even being surrounded, was able to organize a tough defense and continue resistance for a very long time - from several weeks to several months. The German garrison of the city of Kholm was surrounded for four months in 1942. Despite a significant numerical superiority, the troops of the North-Western Front did not succeed in capturing the city. For two months, the German troops fought steadfastly in the Demyansk pocket in the spring of 1942. Okru-

German women near Stalingrad. the troops held out for almost two and a half months and laid down their arms only when the possibilities of further resistance were almost completely exhausted. The fact that out of 92,000 servicemen of the 6th Army who surrendered, only about 6,000 survived, speaks most eloquently about the physical condition of the German soldiers. The rest died not at all because they were treated badly in Soviet captivity, but simply at the time of capitulation they were already on the verge of exhaustion. The troops held the line in difficult winter conditions, practically in a bare field, experiencing a shortage of fuel even for cooking.

What are the reasons for such obvious differences? And here it is impossible not to see the flaws in the system of command and control of the Red Army. It is necessary to start with the fact that in none of the cases of large-scale encirclement was the Headquarters able to organize either the current command and interaction of encircled formations, or the supply of encircled troops, or their deblockade. In almost every large-scale encirclement of the Red Army troops in 1941, there was a real opportunity to organize a stable defense inside the encirclement ring. As a rule, at the disposal of the encircled were a large amount of ammunition and weapons, the resources of Soviet enterprises and the population.

The idea of how many weapons and combat

BEHIND. Kilichenkov 129

supplies were at the disposal of the encircled troops, give evidence of the commander of the cavalry corps, General P.A. Belova. In the winter-spring of 1942, a consolidated cavalry group under his command operated behind enemy lines in the Vyazma region. Feeling an acute need for ammunition and weapons, the units, with the help of the local population, began to search for weapons left over from the October battles. Imagine their surprise when they managed to find not only a large number of small arms and ammunition abandoned in the forests, but also guns and even tanks. From these weapons, after appropriate repairs, a mortar battalion, two batteries of 152-mm howitzers and even a tank battalion consisting of 20 (!) Tanks, incl. two heavy KVs and eight T-34s. And all this is not counting dozens of individual guns and mortars in the subdivisions.

Wooded and rugged terrain contributed to the creation of a solid defense. An idea of how the resistance of the encircled troops could be organized is given by the actions of the same corps of General P.A. Belova. Having broken through behind enemy lines in January 1942, the cavalry, in cooperation with local partisans and paratroopers, held large areas on enemy territory for five months. But the commanders of the encircled formations did not even try to create a stable defense inside the ring, but immediately directed all their actions towards getting out of the encirclement. Why? There were several reasons for this, but they were all a direct result of the Soviet system of government. Absolute majority

The commanders of 1941 still had neither the experience nor the desire for independent command of the troops entrusted to them. When the habit of waiting for instructions from above forced as soon as possible again to be "under the tutelage" of the higher command. Accurate and immediate execution of orders from above at the same time relieved the burden of responsibility, even if they were obviously unsuccessful orders.

But the situation of the environment demanded something completely different. As the front-line writer Boris Vasiliev, who himself found himself surrounded in July 1941, recalled, without showing any initiative, choose

' See: Belov P.A. Moscow is behind us. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1963. S. 235-236.

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escaping from the enemy's ring was absolutely impossible, but "in the environment people behave according to their own ideas about duty and morality"! The adoption of any independent decisions - and in conditions of complete encirclement this became the norm - was fraught with subsequent trials, the outcome of which no one could predict. How to interpret the decision made depended entirely on the respective boss or the commission of inquiry, and their decision was based primarily on the political situation of the moment. In any case, there were sufficient grounds to accuse any commander of violating any order, and here everything depended on the will of the respective commander. The lack of initiative and passivity of the commander automatically led to a drop in the morale of the troops, which finally made an organized and stable defense impossible. The only thing left to do was either to get through to our own people or to desert.

From the memoirs of a Wehrmacht officer G. Biedermann:

"Having begun our march on the Soviet Union, we found ourselves face to face with an unpredictable enemy, whose actions, resistance or devotion could not be foreseen or even estimated. At times we encountered fanatical resistance from a handful of soldiers who fought to the last bullet and, even when all their supplies were exhausted, refused to surrender. It happened that we had an enemy in front of us who surrendered in droves, offering minimal resistance, and for no clearly visible reason. During interrogation of prisoners, it turned out that these variables had little to do with education, place of birth, or political leanings. A simple peasant resisted desperately, while a trained military man. the commander surrendered immediately after contact with us. The next fight showed exactly the opposite, although it did not

A system or a clear cause was seen. —3—3_—_o—_:
See: Vasiliev B.

The age is extraordinary. — M.: Vagrius, 2003. S. 129, 132.

and Biderman G. In mortal combat. Memoirs of an anti-tank crew commander. 1941-1945 / Transl. from English. A.S. Tsyplenkova. - M.: ZAO Center Polygraph, 2005. P. 126.

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The tragedy of the encirclement of 1941, which swallowed up millions of soldiers and officers of the Red Army, revealed with all deadly clarity the inherent defects of the Red Army command and control system, built on the omnipotence and irresponsibility of higher commanders with complete lack of rights and unconditional subordination of executors. At any moment, a superior commander could shift the blame for his own mistakes onto a subordinate. The inevitable consequence of this method of management was a complete lack of confidence in the higher authorities and the desire to avoid responsibility. Any army, especially in the extreme conditions of war, rests on the strength and compulsion of the order. The only factor separating the complete limitlessness of the commander's power from complete irresponsibility is professional corporate ethics, it is ethical ideas that keep the commander from complete tyranny. But by the beginning of the war with Germany, professional ethics had been replaced by the values of communist ideology and behavioral algorithms for survival in conditions of mass repressions. Dominant in these conditions is the desire to avoid responsibility, multiplied by the force of order to his subordinates. It is noteworthy that about

this, in their post-war memoirs, they wrote everything

bosses, regardless of their rank, complaining about their superiors bosses.

From the memoirs of Marshal G.K. Zhukov:

"Without understanding deeply the complexity, methods and ways of preparing modern front-line operations, I.V. Stalin often demanded obviously unrealistic terms for the preparation and conduct of operations. And they, according to his categorical requirements, often began poorly prepared and insufficiently funded. Such operations not only did not achieve the goal, but entailed great losses in people and material resources ...

Leading the fight against the enemy in 1941-1942. for gaining time, the High Command had to take special care

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to treat with caution the preservation of human resources so that at the right moment, equipping them with the latest technology, then bring them down on the enemy. But I. V. Stalin often did not do this.

Getting excited, he often demanded to bring into battle all new

and new units, regardless of the fact that some formations of troops committed to battle have just been mobilized and have not yet had time to receive the necessary combat training. We convinced I.V. Stalin that the premature entry into battle of untrained and uncoordinated units leads to unnecessary losses. In such cases, he got angry and said: "There is nothing to whine, that's what the war is for ..."!

From the memoirs of Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky:

"I can't keep silent about the fact that, both at the beginning of the war and in the Battle of Moscow, higher authorities not so rarely did not take into account either the time or the forces to which they gave orders and orders. Often such orders and orders did not correspond to the situation at the front at the time the troops received them, often they expressed a desire that was not supported by the capabilities of the troops.

It looked like a desire to protect oneself (who gave such an order) from possible troubles from above. In which case, the troops were blamed for allegedly failing to carry out at Kaz, and the "strong-willed" document was left for a justifying reference with the chief or his headquarters. How much grief these "strong-willed" orders brought to the troops, how many unjustified losses were suffered"2.

From the memoirs of Marshal of the Armored Forces A.Kh. Babad janyana (September 1941):

"... we arrived at the disposal of the commander of the 102nd [division] Colonel I.D. Illarionov. After checking our maps, drawing the Red Arrow and firmly sharpening its end, the commander of the 102nd threw away his pencil.

¹ Zhukov G.K. Decree. op. S. 108. ?
Rokossovsky K.K. Decree. cit., p. 132.

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— Advance not-slowly... Clearly?

- Clear. But let me tell you: I can't immediately.

— What is this?! the divisional commander asked menacingly.

- Regiment on the march - 15-20 km from the front line. It takes at least four to five hours to reach the border.

"Major, you are starting badly, what will it be like when you finish?"

Addressed to the chief of staff:

- Reinforce the regiment with a tank battalion, four artillery divisions zones.

He turned back to me.

- Cut the march in half.

He turned back to someone.

- Head of intelligence! Check the accuracy of the execution of the order.
Everybody's Free. Follow orders!

It's easy to say: follow orders. People will arrive barely alive after such a frantic race and will not even have time to eat ... "!.
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The destruction of the troops of the three Soviet fronts, in fact, opened the enemy a direct path to Moscow. The Soviet command did not have any large and organized forces. It seemed that the Soviet capital was doomed and its capture was a matter of the next few days. The situation was desperate.

From the memoirs of Marshal of Aviation A.E. Golovanova:

"... I found Stalin in a room alone. He was sitting on a chair, which was unusual, on the table was untouched cold food. Stalin was silent... A thought flashed through: something had happened, terrible, irreparable, but what? I never saw Stalin like this. Silence pressed. .

"We have a big misfortune, a big grief," I finally heard Stalin's quiet but clear voice. - The Germans broke through the defenses near Vyazma, sixteen of our divisions were surrounded.

After a pause, either asking me or addressing himself, Stalin said in the same quiet voice:

'Babajanyan A.Kh. Roads of Victory. - M.: Young Guard, 1975. S. 66.

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- What do we do? What do we do?! .

Apparently, what happened stunned him.

Then he lifted his head and looked at me. Never before or since have I seen a human face with an expression of such terrible spiritual anguish..."

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From the memoirs of Marshal I.S. Konev:

"It was on these days that Stalin called the Western Front with almost hysterical words about himself in the third person: "Comrade Stalin is not a traitor, Comrade Stalin is not a traitor, Comrade Stalin is an honest man, his whole mistake is that he trusted the cavalymen too much, Comrade Stalin will do everything in his power to rectify the situation."

The German command was so confident in the imminent capture of Moscow that already in the first days after the encirclement near Vyazma, part of the forces of Army Group Center, including the 3rd Panzer Group, were deployed to the northeast for joint operations with the group "North" with the aim of encircling the Soviet troops of the Northwestern Front. This seriously weakened the grouping moving towards Moscow. General G.K. was urgently summoned from Leningrad. Zhukov, he was instructed to organize the defense of Moscow. It was during these days that the Soviet system finally showed its main advantages. In the shortest possible time, all the units at the disposal of the Headquarters were thrown near Moscow - the surviving formations of the fronts defeated near Vyazma and Bryansk, divisions removed from other sectors of defense, the people's militia, cadets of military schools, police detachments, etc. The transfer of units from Central Asia and the Far East began. But there were still so few forces that it was not possible to create a continuous front, and then it was necessary to switch to mobile defense tactics, when mobile groups blocked the main enemy movement routes. The thaw that had begun made it impossible to wide

and Olovnikov A.E. Long-range bomber ... Memoirs of the Chief Air Marshal. 1941-1945. - M.: ZAO Tsentrpoligraf, 2007. P. 88.

. K. Simonov. Conversations with Marshal of the Soviet Union I.S. Konev / Konev I.S. Notes of the front commander. - M.: "Voice", 2000. S. 511.

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flanking maneuvers, which contributed to the success of the new Soviet tactics. The lack of forces of the Soviet command unexpectedly revealed its positive side. The command, reluctantly, was forced to provide more initiative under

mended.

First. An example of the success of the new control scheme was given by the actions of the 4th tank brigade of Colonel M.E. Katukov near Mtsensk. The brigade was to stop the advance of the enemy's 4th Panzer Division on Tula. Katukov, having only 49 tanks, did not throw them into a frontal attack, as he had done before. He preferred ambush tactics. And it turned out that even light Soviet tanks BT and T-26 are capable of delivering effective strikes to the enemy. The new T-34 tanks were especially good. Wide tracks and a powerful engine allowed them to maneuver freely off the roads, quickly changing positions, moving from cover to cover. The tanks of the enemy on their knots

Some caterpillars were forced to move only along the roads in the conditions of mud. Katukov's brigade, using this circumstance, set up a series of ambushes on the way of the enemy movement. Attacking the enemy's flank tank columns and changing positions, the Soviet tankers defeated an enemy division during the fighting on October 4-11, destroying 133 tanks and 49 guns. Alarmed by heavy losses, General G. Guderian arrived at the battlefield. But he only had to state what had happened: "For the first time, the superiority of the Russian T-34 tanks manifested itself in a sharp form ... The superiority of the material part of our tank forces, which has taken place so far, has now been lost and has now passed to the enemy. Thus, the prospects for rapid and continuous success disappeared.

This recognition of the German "tankman No. 1" is also noteworthy in that he assessed the qualities of the Soviet thirty-four only in the fourth (!) Month of the war, although the Germans captured the first copies of this tank already in June. For this to happen, the Soviet commanders only needed to change their tactics, adapting them to the situation. But this was only possible

t Guderian Heinz. Memoirs of a soldier./Translated from German. - Rostov n / Don: Phoenix Publishing House, 1998. P. 231.

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when most of the tanks, including thousands of new thirty-fours, had already been lost. Indeed, there would be no happy
stya...

The commander of the 16th Army, General K.K., successfully organized the defense of his sector. Rokossovsky. The army commander, abandoning the previous scheme of evenly covering the entire line of defense, concentrated the main forces on the most probable sector of the enemy's offensive, created a powerful anti-tank reserve using all the artillery of the army. The main thing was that the attacks of the enemy tank divisions were always predicted, and the German tanks were met by dense and organized artillery fire, engineering barriers, and fighter detachments. There could no longer be any talk of any suddenness of German tank attacks. Although the German divisions managed to move forward on October 16-25, they could not break through the front. The defense held.

German troops could not reach Moscow with one throw. Bad weather also played its part. On October 7, when the German troops received the order for a further advance on Moscow, the first snow fell, and then heavy rains began. The commander of the 3rd Panzer Group, General G. Goth, recalled: "It rained day and night, the rain was continuous, interspersed with snow. The roads are wet; and traffic stopped. He was echoed by the commander of the 2nd tank group, General G. Guderian: "The roads turned into a continuous mess, and our tanks moved along them at a snail's pace, and the material part wore out very quickly ... Wheeled vehicles could only move with the help of tracked vehicles ..."2.

From the memoirs of the Chief of Staff of the 4th Army, General G. Blumentritt: "The memory of Napoleon's Great Army haunted us like a ghost. The book of memoirs of Napoleonic General Caulaincourt, which always lay on Field Marshal von Kluge's desk, became his bible. More and more it became

1 Goth G., Guderian G. Tank Operations, "Tanks Forward!" / Per. with him. - Smolensk: Rusich, 1999. S. 170.

b Guderian G. Decree. op. S. 230.

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the events of 1812. But these elusive omens paled in comparison with the period of mud, or, as it is called in Russia, mudslides, which now haunted us; like a plague.

Of course, we knew that mudslides awaited us - we had to read about it in books. But the reality has surpassed the saddest fears. The mudslide began in mid-October, during the fighting in the Vyazma region, and continuously intensified until mid-November. What is the Russian mudslide, it is impossible to tell a person who himself has never encountered it. There are only a few highways in this corner of the world. The entire territory of the country is covered with impassable sticky mud. An infantryman glides on roads soaked with water. Many horses must be harnessed to haul guns. All wheeled vehicles are deeply immersed in viscous mud. Even tractors move with great difficulty. Many heavy guns got stuck on the roads and therefore were not used in the Moscow battle. Tanks and other tracked vehicles were often sucked in with mud. Now it is not difficult to imagine what strain our already exhausted, exhausted troops were subjected to.

Of course, the bad weather was the same for the Soviet troops, but, unlike the German formations, firstly, they relied on a well-developed road network around Moscow, and secondly, with the onset of cold weather, they received winter uniforms and supplies (winter lubricants and oils for machinery). The unpreparedness of the German troops for the winter was the result of Hitler's gross mistake in determining the timing of the end of the campaign in the East, even when discussing the Barbarossa plan, he harshly rejected warnings about the difficulties of waging war in winter: "I don't want to hear any more of this chatter about the difficulties of supplying our troops in winter. There will be no winter campaign... I categorically forbid talking to me about the winter campaign." As a result, the troops operating in Russia were left without winter uniforms and supplies. Due to loss and ear

1 Blumentritt G. Battle of Moscow / Fatal decisions of the Wehrmacht. — Ros-

tov n / a: Publishing house "Phoenix", 1999. S. 101.

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greasy wear and tear of equipment, the combat power of tank formations by the beginning of the offensive on Moscow fell to 35%, the number of vehicles in the troops was reduced to 15% '.

One can only wonder how, under such conditions, the German troops nevertheless continued to advance, more than once breaking through the Soviet front and approaching 30 km to Moscow. In the capital itself, the situation became critical. On October 15, the GKO made a decision. about the evacuation of the capital. Hundreds of trains and thousands of trucks began to take state property out of Moscow, bridges and city facilities were urgently mined, militia worker battalions were formed, more than half a million Muscovites dug trenches and ditches on the outskirts of the capital. On October 16, under the influence of rapidly spreading rumors about the approach of German troops, a stampede from Moscow began for residents of the city and administrative workers. Documents were burned in the archives. Robbery of abandoned shops and warehouses began.

. And only the introduction of a state of siege in Moscow on October 19, the execution on the spot of robbers and alarmists put an end to the riots. A major role in restoring the morale of the inhabitants of the capital was played by the fact that the top leadership of the country, headed by I.V. Stalin remained in Moscow. No less important in terms of propaganda was the decision to hold, as it was before the war, a solemn meeting and a military parade on Red Square: This was a demonstration of the firm intention of the Soviet political leadership to defend the capital.

The bloodless armies of the Western and Kalinin fronts were replenished with reserves, which were drawn up from all sides near Moscow. By the end of October, the defense front was generally restored. And as soon as the situation stabilized at least for a while, the Headquarters again demanded counterattacks on the enemy. Neither the experience of counterattacks near Smolensk, which weakened their own troops, nor the successful actions of a number of formations that switched to ambush tactics, enlightened the high command. The meager reserves, collected with incredible difficulty, were again thrown into frontal attacks.

1 Beshanov V.V. Decree. op. pp. 480-481.

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In early November, Stalin called the commander of the Western Front, General G.K. Zhukov and demanded to strike in the areas of Volokolamsk and Serpukhov against the enemy, who was preparing to attack Moscow. Zhukov tried to object: "I think that this cannot be done now. We cannot throw on counterattacks, the success of which is doubtful, the last

front reserves. We will then have nothing to reinforce the defense of the army troops when the enemy goes on the offensive with his strike groups.

- Consider the issue of counterattacks resolved. Tell me the plan tonight," J.V. Stalin snapped with displeasure.

Fulfilling the order of the Headquarters, the 49th Army from the Serpukhov region attacked the flank of the 4th German Army. In the course of six days of fierce fighting, little territorial success was achieved. The consequences of the counterattacks of the 16th army of General K.K. Rokossovsky on Volokolamsk. The enemy, having completed preparations for the offensive, had a 2-3-fold superiority in artillery and a 10-fold superiority in tanks. Cavalry divisions that had just arrived from Central Asia were thrown against him. The horses had not yet been re-shod for winter, and the cavalry had not yet had the experience of operating in winter conditions in rough terrain. One night was allotted to prepare for the attack, the outcome of which was horrific. The description of this attack was preserved in the documents of the 4th German Panzer Group: "... three ranks of horsemen moved towards us... Horsemen with shining blades rushed to the attack across the space illuminated by the winter sun, bending down to the necks of the horse dey... The first shells exploded in the midst of the attackers... Soon a solid black cloud hung over them... It is difficult to make out where the horsemen are, where the horses are... Crazy horses rushed about in this hell. The few surviving horsemen were finished off by artillery and machine gun fire... It is impossible to imagine that after the death of the first squadrons, the nightmarish performance will be repeated again... However, the area has already been shot down and the death of the second wave of cavalry occurred even faster than the first...>?. Not

1 Zhukov G.K. Decree. cit., S. 230. 2 Cited. ,
In: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 241.

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the 58th Panzer Division transferred to the 16th Army also achieved success. It was a unit fully equipped with equipment and people - almost 200 tanks and over 5,000 people, just arrived from the Far East. Like the cavalry, the division was thrown into the offensive without preparation, partly landed in a swamp, partly ambushed by German anti-tank artillery. By the end of the day, the division had lost 158 tanks and a third of its personnel."

These counterattacks did not prevent the enemy's offensive, but rather, on the contrary, contributed to his success to a large extent. Having repulsed the unorganized attack of Soviet tanks and the suicidal attacks of the cavalry, the German formations of Army Group Center on the same day, November 16, launched a general offensive against Moscow. The command of the Western Front, left without reserves, was unable to fend off the enemy's attacks. In the south, German tank divisions approached Kashira. On the northern sector, the enemy captured Kalinin and Solnechnogorsk, went to the Istra reservoir, dangerously hanging over

Moscow. The battle has reached its tipping point. On December 1, the Germans brought their last reserves into battle - one tank and one infantry division and captured Bely and Krasnaya Polyana, from where it was already possible to shell Moscow.

But these were the last successes of the Wehrmacht near Moscow, the Germans were no longer able to advance. In the end, everything was decided by the reserves. But the age-old truth was confirmed - in the end, the one who has more reserves wins the war. While the Germans were throwing their last divisions into battle and Field Marshal F. Bock was sure that the "last battalion" could decide the outcome of the battle, four fresh armies were concentrated in the rear of the Soviet Western Front and two more were on the way. The Soviet Headquarters succeeded in accomplishing the impossible - while the defense near Moscow was stretched out into the thinnest thread and was about to collapse, when Stalin personally distributed reserve platoons and batteries along the fronts, the most powerful reserves were concentrated behind Moscow, transferred from the depths. That is why recent breakthroughs are not

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See: Beshanov V.V. Decree. op. S. 486.

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The German troops were easily parried, and the Soviet troops launched a general counteroffensive. It began almost without interruption in the battle and turned out to be a complete surprise for the Germans.

Counterattack near Moscow. In fact, the very idea of a counteroffensive appeared at the Stavka at the end of October, when it was possible to temporarily stabilize the front near Moscow. On November 1, it was decided to form 10 reserve armies, 9 tank brigades and 49 separate tank battalions by the beginning of December. Part of these reserves was used at the end of November in order to finally stop the enemy who had broken through. On November 29, the commander of the Western Front, General G.K. Zhukov, turning to Headquarters, offered to give an order to start a counteroffensive. "The enemy is exhausted. But if we do not liquidate dangerous enemy penetrations now, the Germans will be able to reinforce their troops ... with large reserves ... and then the situation may become seriously complicated! In the evening of the same day, Stalin agreed, and a counteroffensive plan was prepared at the headquarters of the Western Front. As G.K. Zhukov, the authors of the plan did not yet imagine that the planned counterattack would acquire such grandiose proportions. The original plan was much more modest - "to throw back the most threatening enemy forces with a breakthrough to Moscow."

By December 6, the fronts received replenishment - 27 divisions, which allowed them to bring their forces involved in the counteroffensive to | 100 thousand people, 774 tanks, 1,000 aircraft, over 7,600 guns. The peculiarity of the situation was that the enemy as a whole retained an advantage in strength - as part of a group

armies 'Center', there were | 708 thousand people, 1,170 tanks, 615 aircraft and about 13,500 guns.

This generally unfavorable balance of power was exacerbated by the general condition of the Soviet troops. New armies were formed from conscripts, or who did not have a military at all.

7 Zhukov G.K. Decree. op. P. 244. | 2 Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 252. 3 Ibid.

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noah training, or who have passed its accelerated course. The shortage of weapons led to the fact that new formations received them already at the front. The shortage of small arms remained especially acute. Not even rifles were available. Those very old Russian three-rulers of the 1891/1930 model, which faithfully served the Russian soldier since the Russo-Japanese War. To arm replacements, it was necessary to collect weapons on the battlefields.

From the memoirs of Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky:

"Our units were replenished as needed at the expense of those who got out of the encirclement. The influx of people walking from west to east - to their own! - did not stop: some were coming from the very border, some from near Minsk... Many officers - I treated them with special respect - took out their groups with weapons, broke through with a fight. But how many fighters and commanders came out unarmed! All of them needed to be armed. With what? We received little from the rear in those days.

Someone - almost Aleksey Andreevich Lobachev - suggested the idea: if the encircled were able to pass in whole groups across the front line and across the territory occupied by the enemy, then we are also able to send scouts behind enemy lines and look for weapons on the fields of past battles. We tried. The experience turned out to be very successful, and for a long time we got what we needed from under the noses of the Germans in this way. Groups of daredevils, including comrades who got out of the encirclement and knew where to go, brought rifles, machine guns, machine guns, mortars, even took out 45-millimeter guns, not to mention ammunition, which we also badly needed »".

Although German intelligence uncovered the concentration of Soviet reserves near Moscow in time, the command of the German army continued to be captivated by its own illusions about the inability of the Red Army to attack. The German generals simply did not believe that after the monstrous losses of the autumn of 1941

Soviet troops are capable of advancing, and the failure of the offensive

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¹ Rokossovsky K.K. Decree. op. S. 74.

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Moscow was explained in the early and very cold winter. In his directive of December 8: 1941, Hitler stated: "Before the temporary onset of a cold winter on the Eastern Front and the difficulties that arose in connection with the supply of supplies, you need to immediately stop all offensive operations. and go kobarone"!.

Nevertheless, the Soviet counteroffensive began, and it turned out to be completely unexpected for the enemy. Troops of three Soviet fronts - Kalinin (commander - Lieutenant General I.S. Konev), Western (commander - General of the Army G.K. Zhukov) and South-Western (commander - Marshal S.K. Timoshenko) 5-8 December went on the counteroffensive in six directions at once. In general, the configuration of the front line near Moscow turned out to be extremely beneficial for the offensive of the Red Army. The German troops, moving far towards Moscow, formed a deep ledge, on the flanks of which were the troops of the Kalinin and Southwestern fronts. The possibility of a successful offensive was also facilitated by the condition of the German troops. Lacking winter uniforms and supplies, means of organizing defense in winter conditions, having a limited number of supply lines, being exhausted by continuous battles and heavy losses in people and equipment, the German formations were extremely weakened and unable to create a solid line of defense. All this opened up great prospects for successful encirclement strikes. However, the result of the four-week Soviet offensive was only a frontal push of the enemy to the west, away from Moscow.

Thus, the most favorable opportunities for encircling the enemy and achieving significant operational results have developed in the zone of the Kalinin Front. Hanging with their own forces over the entire Moscow grouping from the north, the troops of the front, in the event of the capture of Kalinin and further advance, endangered the deep envelopment of the left flank of Army Group Center. In addition, huge stocks of weapons and food were concentrated in Kalinin itself, a large number of

¹ Cited. In: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 257.

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quality of aviation at airfields. However, the front was tasked only to ensure the actions of the right flank of the Western Front and to strengthen the front of General I.S. Konev received only one rifle division and two tank battalions out of a total of 27 divisions transferred to three fronts for training.

, offensive. And only after the capture of Kalinin on December 16 the front received two more divisions. But the enemy has already managed to lead his troops out from under attack.

The most favorable opportunities were on the southern flank of the Western Front near Tula. The 2nd tank army of General G. Guderian, which opposed him, was stretched out on a 350-kilometer front and pinned down by the actions of Soviet formations. There were significant gaps in the German defense. The sudden offensive of the 10th Army on December 7 (commanded by General F.I. Golikov) and its rapid advance deep into the enemy's battle formations caused panic in all units. At that moment, the prospect opened up before the Soviet command with a counterattack by the 50th Army from the direction of Tula to encircle part of the forces of G. Guderian's tank army. Later, General G. Blumentritt recalled: "The German command almost did not hope to avoid the encirclement and defeat of the southern grouping ..." But the formations of the 2nd Panzer Army still managed to retreat to the rear defensive lines in an organized manner. The encirclement did not work out.

There were several reasons for this. The most important of these was the inability of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command of the Red Army to plan and coordinate offensive operations on several fronts—to formulate a general plan for the operation, to determine the priority directions of strikes, to distribute forces and reserves in accordance with this, to set specific tasks for the command of the fronts, to promptly respond to changing environment. The command of the fronts sought to strike in several directions at once, and as a result, there were not enough forces in any of them. Army commanders, as a rule, preferred frontal, frontal attacks to the enemy's defense, while conditions dictated the need for bypasses and envelopment of fortified points. In analytical

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The German intelligence review "War Experience in the East", from January 1942, described the attacks of the Red Army infantry as follows: changes. The advancing infantry leaves their infantry positions in compact groups and rushes to the attack from a great distance with a cry of "Hurrah" ... Repulsed attacks are repeated again, sparing no effort and changing nothing. It is difficult to assume that during one day of fighting the advancing unit will in any way change the scheme of the attack. Thus, to repel Russian attacks, strong nerves and the consciousness that our excellent small arms are able to withstand a massive Russian offensive are needed. The worst was the chronic shortage of ammunition, which left the exhausted infantry without fire support. The overall result of these miscalculations and mistakes was the "squeezing out" of the enemy from protrusions fraught with encirclement instead of deep and decisive encirclement. This ineradicable commitment to frontal tactics has led to the fact that, together with

one hundred flank attacks on Army Group Center on Kalinin and Tula, which would create a threat of encirclement of its main formations, Zhukov's armies simply began to push the enemy to the west. But even this simplest tactic brought the German army to the brink of disaster. "Only the one who, in this winter of our misfortune, personally saw the endless expanses of the Russian snowy plains, where the icy wind instantly covered up all traces, only the one who drove for hours through the "no man's" territory, meeting only insignificant guard units, the soldiers of which did not have the necessary uniforms and food," General G. Guderian recalled, "while the enemy's fresh Siberian units were dressed in excellent winter uniforms ... only he could correctly assess the serious events that followed soon"? A massive and hasty retreat threatened the German army with complete disaster. A ghost on the Poleonian armada, which hastily left Moscow and the Rasta

1 Cited. by: Beshanov V.V. Decree. op. pp. 512-513. . Guderian
Heinz. Decree. op. S. 251.

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which appeared in the vast expanses of the Russian winter desert, soared in the German headquarters.

The complete defeat of Army Group Center prevented the decisive actions of the Wehrmacht Supreme High Command. Finally realizing that the Russian offensive had gone beyond tactical success, Hitler on December 16 ordered the troops of Army Group Center to hold out to the last opportunity in order to buy time to improve transport links, pull up reserves, evacuate equipment and equipment of the rear line. "All available forces must be sent to the Eastern Front: take away winter clothes from prisoners of war and the local population, destroy residential buildings in the territory left behind." At the same time, Hitler dismissed General Field Marshal V. Brauchitsch from the post of commander of the ground forces and himself became the head of the ground forces. Hitler's "stop order", given contrary to the opinion of a number of generals, in fact, saved the Wehrmacht from the fate of Napoleon's "great armada". Hitler prevented a massive retreat, inevitable colossal losses of people and equipment. German formations could carry out a withdrawal only by abandoning heavy weapons, and without it it would be impossible to hold new defensive positions. Hitler saw a way out of the situation that had arisen in one thing: "To force the troops to provide fanatical resistance in their positions, despite the penetration of the enemy on the flanks and exit to the rear." Moreover, the order to fight for every settlement where the troops could find warmth and food, fettered the offensive of the Red Army. In the conditions of a snowy winter, the offensive was possible only along the roads, and all of them passed through villages and villages. As a result of Tat, the offensive actions of the Soviet troops quickly reduced to a fight for every settlement turned against. No one in the defense knot.

By early January, the Soviet counter-offensive near Moscow was over. The advance of the Red Army in the north in the zone of the Kalinin Front was about 70-80 km. Formations of the Southwestern Front (from December 18 they became part of the newly

created Bryansk Front under the command of General

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Colonel Ya.T. Cherevichenko) pushed the enemy back 100-150 km. The immediate threat to the capital was eliminated.

But the significance of the battle near Moscow went far beyond the framework of a successful operation to remove the threat of capturing the capital. For the first time in World War II, the troops of the German army, which considered itself invincible, were stopped, and then suffered a major defeat. Near Moscow, the Germans lost the "blitzkrieg" against the Soviet Union. The collapse of the Krieg blitz made the Third Reich look like a protracted war, for which neither the country nor its leadership were ready.

Subsequently, the German generals were inclined to see the beginning of the catastrophe in the East in the events near Moscow. Thus, Field Marshal V. Keitel stated that after the Battle of Moscow he could not imagine a "military solution" to the entire eastern campaign. General G. Blumentritt called the battle near Moscow the "turning point" of the campaign in Russia. The former commander of the 47th motorized corps, General R. Bamler, argued that "the retreat of 1941-1942. was the starting point of a great military crisis, from which the German army was neither materially nor morally able to recover. And Hitler's adjutant von Belov, in his memoirs, attributed the events near Moscow to "a great turning point in the course of World War II." The chief of staff of the ground forces, General G. Halder, noted: "The myth of the invincibility of the German army has been broken. With the onset of summer, the German army will achieve new victories in Russia, but this will no longer restore the myth of its invincibility. Therefore, December 6, 1941 can be considered a turning point, and one of the most fatal moments in the short history of the Third Reich. The strength and power of Hitler reached its climax, and from that moment on they began to wane...".

— MOBILIZING THE POTENTIAL TO VICTORY

The need for immediate and maximum mobilization of the entire potential of the country to repel the aggression that had begun was not immediately realized by the Soviet leadership - another

1 Cited. In: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S.279-280.

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evidence that Stalin and his entourage did not realize

how unprepared the Red Army was for the outbreak of war. The impetus for realizing the true scale of the impending threat was the catastrophe of the Western Front and the capture of Minsk by the Germans on June 28, 1941. The next day, a directive was sent from Moscow to all Soviet and party organizations in the front-line regions.

From the directive of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (6) of June 29, 1941:

"Despite the serious threat that has arisen for our country, some Party, Soviet, trade union and Komsomol organizations and their leaders still do not understand the meaning of this threat, have not yet realized the significance of this threat, live in complacent and peaceful moods and do not understand that war dramatically changed the situation, that our homeland was in the greatest danger and that we must quickly and decisively reorganize all our work on a war footing.

The Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Soviet Union (6) oblige all Party, Soviet, trade union and Komsomol organizations to put an end to complacency and carelessness and mobilize all our organizations and all the forces of the people to defeat the enemy, to ruthlessly deal with the hordes of attacked German fascism.

The Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (6) demand from you:

1) In a merciless struggle against the enemy, to defend every inch of Soviet land, to fight to the last drop of blood for our cities and villages, to show the courage, initiative and ingenuity inherent in our people.

2) Organize all-round assistance to the active army, ensure the organized conduct of the mobilization of the reserve, ensure the supply of the army with everything necessary, the rapid advance of transports with troops and military cargo, and the provision of extensive assistance to the wounded: for hospitals, schools, clubs, institutions.

3) Strengthen the rear of the Red Army, subordinating the interests

`Front all its activities, ensure the intensive work of all enterprises, explain to the working people their duties and the situation that has arisen ...

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5) In areas occupied by the enemy, create partisan detachments and sabotage groups to fight enemy army units, to incite partisan war everywhere and everywhere ...

The Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Soviet Union (6) declare that in the imposed war with fascist Germany, the question of life and death of the Soviet state is being decided, whether the peoples of the Soviet Union should be free or fall into enslavement.

Now everything depends on our ability to quickly organize and act, not losing a minute of time, not missing a single opportunity in the fight against the enemy.

In his first speech, the famous address to the Soviet people on July 3, 1941, I.V. Stalin repeated the main provisions of this directive, but in doing so he turned not to the Soviet and party organizations, but to the entire Soviet people. By this time, Stalin realized that it was necessary to mobilize the potential of the entire people, the entire country. From this moment begins the restructuring of the entire economy on a war footing, subordinating it to the needs of defense and warfare. These days, the creation of emergency government bodies is being completed. The key among them was the State Defense Committee (GKO), formed on June 30, 1941 by the decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (6) and the Council of People's Commissars. It included: I.V. Stalin (chairman), V.M. Molotov (Deputy Chairman), K.E. Voroshilov, G.M. Malenkov, later N.A. Bulganin, N.A. Voznesensky, L.M. Kaganovich, A.I. Mikoyan.

The main function of the GKO was to manage the activities of all government departments and institutions in order to mobilize all the material, spiritual and military capabilities of the country for waging war. The GKO resolutions had the force of wartime laws and did not require their subsequent discussion and approval by the legislature, coming into force immediately, which ensured high efficiency in resolving all issues. All Soviet, state, parties-

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Cit. Quoted from: Great Patriotic... S. 500-501.

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nye, military, economic and trade union bodies were obliged to unquestioningly carry out the decisions and orders of the State Defense Committee. As the highest body of state administration, the GKO set the necessary tasks for the Supreme High Command and for the Armed Forces of the USSR as a whole, improved the structure of the Armed Forces, placed leading personnel, determined the general nature of the use of the Armed Forces in war, and directed the struggle behind enemy lines. In fact, the GKO became a kind of emergency superstructure on top of the powerful Soviet bureaucratic system, using all its elements, but without being bound by any bureaucratic system.

procedure.

From the memoirs of Marshal G.K. Zhukov:

"At the GKO meetings, which took place at any time of the day, as a rule, in the Kremlin or at the dacha of I.V. Stalin, the most important issues were discussed and resolved. Military action plans

Viy were considered by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Party and the State Defense Committee. People's commissars were invited to the meetings, who were to take part in supporting the operations. This made it possible, when the opportunity arose, to concentrate enormous material forces in the most important directions, to pursue a single line in the field of strategic leadership and, backing it up with an organized rear, to link the combat activity of the troops with the efforts of the entire country. Very often sharp disputes broke out at GKO meetings, while opinions were expressed definitely and sharply. If no consensus was reached, a commission was immediately set up from representatives of the extreme parties, which was instructed to report the agreed proposals at the next meeting.

The highest efficiency of the decisions made was ensured by the fact that I.V. Stalin, being at the same time General Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Soviet Union (6), Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR (since May 6, 1941), Supreme Commander-in-Chief (since August 8, 1941), People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR (since

1 Zhukov G.K. Decree. op. S. 71.

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July 19, 1941). Because of this, Stalin was both formally and actually able to resolve any issues of national importance. Such a concentration of power at that time could not be afforded by any of the leaders of the warring states. Mobility in the implementation of the decisions made was supplemented by the expansion of the rights of members of the government, due to the decision of the Council of People's Commissars of [July 1941 "On the expansion of the rights of people's commissars of the USSR in wartime conditions." Now people's commissars could, at their own discretion, distribute material resources and labor in subordinate enterprises. To improve the system of economic management, new governing bodies were created - the People's Commissariat for the Tank Industry, the People's Commissariat for Mortar Weapons, the Committee for the Accounting and Distribution of Labor, the Department for the Evacuation of the Population, etc. To strengthen the new emergency "vertical" of state administration, the existing since 1933, the institute of party organizers of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (6). In the first months of the war, PC party organizers were assigned to 1,170 of the country's largest factories, which were of particular defense importance! Party organizers of the Central Committee had direct access to the top leadership of the country and could at any time put before the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Soviet Union (6) and the State Defense Committee any questions related to the activities of their enterprises. But still, their main function was to inform the top management about the state of affairs at their enterprise. Party organizers of the Central Committee have become another "eye of the sovereign" in the field, performing the same tasks as members of the military councils of the fronts and armies in the armed forces.

The new emergency management system immediately had to solve two main tasks that determined the success of mobilizing the country's potential - the evacuation of the population and

production from the frontline zone and the militarization of production in the rear. The first task arose with all its acuteness already in the first days of the war as a result of the rapid advance of the German troops into the depths of Soviet territory. Already on the third day of the war, June 24, the Council for the Evacuation of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR was created under the chairmanship of L.M. Kaganovich, on July 3 he was deputy

1 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 387.

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Nen N.M. Shvernik. The composition of the Council for the Evacuation was finally formed only at the end of September 1941. In the localities, the executive committees of local councils, district committees and city committees of the party were responsible for the implementation of the evacuation. The aforementioned directive of the Council of People's Commissars of June 29, 1941, set the task of evacuation very categorically for the local authorities: "When the Red Army units are forced to move, steal a rolling stock, leave not a single steam locomotive, not a single wagon for the enemy, do not leave the enemy a single kilogram bread, not a liter of fuel ... ". The scale of the evacuation work was colossal. In the summer of 1941, over 80% of defense industry enterprises, 94% of aircraft factories, in total 31,850 factories and factories, including about 7,500 large enterprises, ended up in the frontline zone. Of these, only 2,593 enterprises were evacuated by rail, some of the enterprises were sent to the rear by other means of transport. It was possible to transport more than 12 million people to the eastern regions. But still, on the territory captured by the enemy by the end of the autumn of 1941, a large part of the industrial potential and about 20% of the collective farm livestock remained. The evacuation was carried out in extremely difficult conditions of lack of transport, loading facilities, organizational confusion, constant enemy air raids. However, at the cost of heroic efforts, it was possible to evacuate the most important enterprises for the defense capability and 30-40% of workers and engineers and technicians. These plants and factories made up a significant part of the industrial potential of the victory. In terms of its scale and result, the evacuation carried out in the USSR is an action unprecedented in history. Despite all the costs, miscalculations and mistakes, it was possible to evacuate enterprises that have become the core of production in the eastern regions in a number of industries. As subsequent events showed, this decisively predetermined the victory of the Soviet Union in the military-economic competition with Germany. Neither France in 1940 nor itself could solve such a problem.

,Cit. Quoted from: Great Patriotic War... S. 501.

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Germany in 1944, when it became necessary to leave its territory.

The well-known English journalist A. Werth, who worked during the war years in the Soviet Union, assessed the importance of the evacuation of industry as follows: "The evacuation of industry in the second half of 1941 and at the beginning of 1942 and its "settlement" in the east should be considered among the most striking organizational and human exploits of the Soviet Union during the war. The story of how entire enterprises and millions of people were taken to the East, how these enterprises were restored in the shortest possible time, under unheard of difficult conditions, and how they managed to increase production enormously during 1942, is, above all, a story about an incredible human resilience. In most places, conditions were appalling, and food was often scarce. People worked because they knew it was absolutely necessary. They worked twelve, thirteen, fourteen hours a day, they lived on their nerves, they realized that their work had never been so needed ...".

The task of transferring industry to military production was solved on the basis of a mobilization plan developed even before the war, which was corrected in August 1941. But even here the situation soon turned out to be critical due to the fact that a large number of defense plants ended up in the front line and were subject to evacuation. Thus, the People's Commissariat of the aviation industry had to evacuate 85% of its facilities, the People's Commissariat of Armaments 97% of its factories. By the end of 1941, industrial production as a whole had fallen 2.1 times. For certain types of production, the reduction was of a supercritical nature - the production of ball bearings decreased by 21 times, rolled non-ferrous metals - by 430 times. These losses immediately affected the output of military products. In the second half of 1941, the production of tanks amounted to only about 62% of the plan, the production of aircraft in December 1941 -

| Cit. by: GTelpukhovskiy V.B. Heroism of the working class / War and society, 1941-1945: In 2 books. Rep. ed. G.N. Sevostyanov. - M.: Nauka, 2004. Book. 2. P.11.

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39% of the number planned'. These losses had to be compensated for by reprofiling a number of industries and intensifying the work of the surviving enterprises. Enormous work was done to transfer thousands of civilian enterprises to the production of military products, hundreds of new enterprises were built. Five new non-ferrous metal rolling plants were built in an emergency mode, new facilities were created for the extraction of iron ore and non-ferrous metals, coal, and the production of electricity.

The growth of military production was also achieved by increasing the length of the working day. This measure became almost inevitable due to the sharp reduction in the number of workers. By the end of 1941, the number of workers and employees amounted to only 58.7% of the pre-war level, among the most important

branches of the economy—metallurgy, the coal industry, and others—the number of workers has more than halved.

Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on the working hours of workers and employees in wartime. June 26, 1941

"In order to ensure the fulfillment of production tasks related to the needs of wartime, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR decides:

1. Grant the directors of enterprises in industry, transport, agriculture and trade the right to establish, with the permission of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, both for all workers and employees of enterprises, and for individual shops, sections and groups of workers and employees, compulsory overtime work lasting from | up to 3 hours a day.

2. Persons under the age of 16 may be involved in obligatory

mandatory overtime work of not more than 2 hours per day. : 3. Cannot be called to mandatory overtime

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work pregnant women from the sixth month of pregnancy, as well as women who are breastfeeding, for 6 months of feeding.

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' See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 4. S. 77.

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4. Payment of obligatory overtime work to workers and employees shall be made in one and a half times.

5. Cancel regular and additional vacations, replacing them with monetary compensation for unused vacations, in all state, cooperative and public enterprises and institutions. Leave is granted only in case of illness. Provide maternity leave in accordance with Art. 14 of the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (6) and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions of December 28, 1938 "I.

These measures alone made it possible to save between 7 and 7.5 million workers during the war years. In July 1941, by a decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, local authorities received the right to transfer workers to another job, and in December 1941, by a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, all workers at military enterprises were declared mobilized. Unauthorized departure from work was regarded as desertion.

To compensate for the loss in the number of workers, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a Decree "On mobilization in the peri-

Wartime Code of the Able-bodied Urban Population", which applied to men aged 16 to 55 years and women aged 16 to 45 from among those who did not work in state enterprises and institutions. The mass recruitment of pensioners and teenagers, starting from the age of 14, also helped to fill the shortage of workers. The general labor mobilization of the population was carried out by the Committee for the Accounting and Distribution of Labor Force, which was created under the Council of People's Commissars already at the very beginning of the war.

The most important part of the overall mobilization of the country's potential was the organization of the partisan movement. The directive of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (6) of June 29, 1941 set the task of organizing resistance in the occupied territory for the local authorities, and on July 18, 1941 The Central Committee adopted a special resolution "On the organization of the struggle in the rear of the German troops", which specified the provisions of the directive of June 29. Resist-

¹ Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945 Rear. An occupation. Resistance. M., 1993. P.9.

² See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 4. pp. 89-90.

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Resistance to the enemy was organized in two main forms - partisan detachments and underground groups. The first of them were armed formations numbering from several tens to several thousand people, which had a paramilitary structure and operated in hard-to-reach forest and mountainous areas. The partisan detachments waged an open armed struggle against the enemy troops and the occupying authorities. The basis of the underground movement was formed by small, strictly conspiratorial groups numbering several dozen people. Acts of sabotage became the main form of their actions - the destruction of enemy communications, rolling stock, the destruction of individual enemy servicemen and his accomplices, as well as reconnaissance and propaganda activities.

However, the first experience of resistance, especially of the underground movement, often led to tragic results. In the very first months of the occupation, the Gestapo service uncovered hundreds of underground party and Komsomol committees, thousands of communists and Komsomol members were arrested and martyred. The main reasons for this were the same as the reasons for the defeats of the Red Army. The USSR entered the war, being unprepared for such actions. To be aware of this "was all the more insulting because in the 1920s. preparations for the partisan and underground struggle were in full swing. Trained personnel were created, detachments and groups were organized, caches with weapons and ammunition were laid in the border areas. So, only on the territory of Belarus were ready six partisan detachments of 300-500 people, in the border towns and at railway junctions there were underground sabotage groups. Stored in secret warehouses

pos 50 thousand rifles, 150 machine guns, ammunition and mine explosives. More than 3,000 partisan commanders and specialists have been trained in the Ukraine.

However, in the second half of the 1930s the military-political leadership abandoned plans for a large-scale and organized partisan and underground struggle on its territory

1 Kiselev E. Saboteurs of the Red Army//NVO, 07/29/2005.

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rhetoric. A war with "little blood and a mighty blow" on the territory of the enemy made partisan detachments unnecessary. The trained detachments were disbanded, the secret bases were destroyed, some of the experienced organizers were repressed. van.

As a result, another improvisation began in the first weeks of the war. The first directives of the central government were essentially political instructions, equipped with propagandistic guidelines. The main issues were not resolved - organization, coordination of the activities of various centers, communication with the central authorities, training of personnel, material support. All these mistakes were aggravated by confusion at the very top - from the very beginning, the organization of the partisan movement was taken up by the General Staff of the Red Army, the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Soviet Union (6). Each of these centers organized and controlled the activities of detachments that were practically unrelated to each other. A large number of detachments arose on the ground, many of them spontaneously created by soldiers and officers of the Red Army who found themselves surrounded. In July 1941, the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army turned to the military personnel who found themselves in the occupied territory. Leaflets with a call to switch to guerrilla warfare were scattered over a vast territory. By the end of 1941, 10 underground regional committees, more than 260 district committees, city committees, district committees and almost 3,500 partisan detachments began their struggle in the occupied territory. They faced extreme difficulties - there were not enough weapons, ammunition, food, and most of all, there was a lack of means of communication. Many of the difficulties were the result of the fact that many leaders in the field failed to cope with their tasks. The aforementioned resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Soviet Union (6) of July 18 specifically noted this phenomenon: "It is not uncommon for the leaders of party and Soviet organizations in areas threatened by capture by the German fascists to shamefully abandon their combat posts, retreat into the depths of

1 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 4. S. 134.

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the side rear, to quiet places, in fact turn into deserters and miserable cowards ... "!. The first military winter was very difficult for the partisans. First of all, the general unpreparedness for waging war behind enemy lines made itself felt. There was no intelligence network, the elementary rules of conspiracy were grossly violated, intelligence was conducted ineptly and unsystematically. The received intelligence data was not processed, and those that were sent behind the front line to the command of the Red Army were wasted, because. delivered by couriers, which took weeks. The tactics of warfare were not mastered, and many detachments, primarily large ones, were defeated in the very first clashes with the enemy. Many detachments disbanded themselves. Large detachments more than small groups suffered from a lack of food, weapons, ammunition and were more vulnerable in the face of enemy counter guerrilla operations. The most effective were small partisan detachments, consisting of encircled men with combat experience, and. local residents who knew the situation in the area well. The situation was especially difficult for partisan actions in the territories that not long ago became part of the USSR. The rapid capture of these areas by the enemy and the hostile attitude of the population did not allow the creation of a solid base for partisan formations and seriously limited their actions.

And yet, with all the organizational shortcomings and proma-. hah, the movement of partisans and underground workers created a serious threat to the German troops. During the winter of 1941/42, the partisans derailed 224 echelons and blew up 650 bridges. For the command of the Wehrmacht, this was a big surprise, since it proceeded from the expectation that the outbreak of war would cause anti-Soviet speeches and paralyze the actions of the Soviet authorities. But with the accumulation of experience and the elimination of organizational miscalculations, the actions of the Nartizans became an important part of the overall struggle against the enemy.

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1 Great Patriotic War ... S. 133.

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GAINING ALLIES

The German attack on the USSR was a turning point in the relations of the Soviet Union with future allies in the anti-Hitler coalition. The turn of the Western governments from a clearly hostile position, formed under the influence of the Soviet-Finnish war, to a willingness to cooperate took place in the summer of 1941 after receiving information about Germany's readiness to attack the USSR. On June 15, British Prime Minister W. Churchill informed US President F. Roosevelt of his readiness to provide "all possible assistance to the Russians", based on the fact that Hitler is a common enemy. And already on the evening of June 22, the British Prime Minister, in his speech on the radio, announced his readiness to provide the USSR with all

possible help. Two days later, the US president made a similar statement. On July 3, Stalin, in his first speech during the war, expressed gratitude to the governments of England and the United States for their readiness to provide assistance: "... the historic speech of the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Mr. Churchill, on helping the Soviet Union and the declaration of the US Government on readiness to help our country, which can only evoke a feeling of gratitude in the hearts of the peoples of the Soviet Union, are quite understandable and indicative"².

There were still many obstacles on the way to full-fledged cooperation, the main of which was the tradition of mutual distrust and ideological differences. The readiness of the allies to provide large-scale and immediate assistance was also constrained by pessimistic assessments of the combat effectiveness of the Red Army. Western analysts believed that the army had never recovered from the repressions, and the Soviet Union could only resist for a short time, but they noted that the struggle of the Red Army was "the only encouraging factor." The dramatic outcome of the border battles on the Soviet-German front under

¹ See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 426. ² I. V. Stalin. About the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union. M.,

1946. S. 16.

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pushed both sides to reach an agreement as soon as possible. \$ July 1941 during a meeting with the Ambassador of England St. Cripps Stalin proposed to conclude an agreement on mutual assistance in the war against Germany and the rejection of a separate peace. On July 12, in Moscow, such an agreement was signed by V.M. Molotov and St. Cripps, it marked the beginning of the formation of the anti-Hitler coalition. At the end of July 1941, G. Hopkins, the personal representative of the President of the United States, visited Moscow. This visit played a decisive role in establishing military cooperation between the two countries. During the negotiations, it was possible to discuss the size and content of military deliveries to the USSR, as well as methods of transportation. Hopkins' personal interactions with Stalin and other Soviet leaders helped to reassess the prospects for the Soviet Union's struggle against Germany. In his message to the President of the United States, Hopkins emphasized: "There is an unbounded determination to win here." On the same days, the analysts of the British Chiefs of Staff Committee, having reassessed the prospects for fighting on the Soviet-German front, came to the conclusion that the Red Army was capable of continuing resistance for another five months, which eliminated the threat of an invasion of the British Isles until the end of 1941. | The next step in the formation of the anti-Hitler coalition was the signing on August 14, 1941 by the heads of the governments of the United States and Great Britain of the Atlantic Charter. It included 8 points and defined in a general form the goals of the war and the principles.

post-war order of the world. The Charter emphasized that the United States and England "do not seek territorial or other acquisitions ... will not agree to any territorial changes that are not in accordance with the freely expressed desire of the peoples concerned ... respect the right of all peoples to choose their own form of government." The Western press, by analogy with the famous "New Deal" of President Roosevelt during the "Great Depression", called the Atlantic Charter "A New Deal for the World." September 24, 1941

Yuznicheskoy conference in London, which was attended by EY,. Cit. In:

The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 431.

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representatives of Great Britain, the USSR and a number of emigrant governments of countries occupied by Germany, the Soviet representative I.M. Maisky announced the accession of the Soviet Union to the Atlantic Charter, indicating, however, that the application of its principles "... will have to be consistent with the circumstances, needs and historical characteristics of this or that country ..."

By that time, the Soviet Union was continuing an active process of establishing relations with the exile governments of the occupied countries that had declared war on Germany. On July 18, an agreement was signed with Czechoslovakia on the restoration of diplomatic relations and mutual assistance in the war with Germany. At the end of September, on the basis of this agreement, the formation of Czechoslovak military units began on the territory of the USSR. On July 30, a similar agreement was concluded with the Polish government in exile, and the formation of Polish military units on Soviet territory began. In the process of negotiations, the government of the USSR declared that the Soviet-German treaties of 1939 regarding Poland were considered "non-existent". In September 1941, the Soviet government recognized the chairman of the Free French National Committee, General Charles de Gaulle, as the leader of "all free Frenchmen, wherever they may be..." In response, General de Gaulle declared his readiness to fight fascism together with USSR and its allies until the final victory.

Despite obvious successes in the formation of the diplomatic basis of the anti-Hitler coalition, the real state of military cooperation left much to be desired. Two issues from the very beginning began to cause significant disagreements - the activation of the actions of the British (later allied) armed forces against Germany and the supply of weapons to the Soviet Union. From the very beginning of allied relations to the end of the war, these two questions proved to be closely connected with the course of the struggle on the Soviet-German front. In early September, when German troops had already approached Leningrad and captured Smolensk, when the cata-

1 See: Great Patriotic... S. 433.

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stanza of the Southwestern Front near Kiev, Stalin addressed a personal message to Churchill. With all admissible categorism, the Soviet leader insisted on the quickest opening of a second front "somewhere in the Balkans or in France" with the aim of withdrawing up to 40 German divisions from the Eastern Front, or else landing 25-30 British divisions in Arkhangelsk. The question of urgent delivery of aircraft was sharply raised,

tanks and aluminum.

But the British government was in no hurry to render power to the new ally. Subsequently, at the height of the Cold War, the accusation of unwillingness to provide effective assistance to the Soviet Union during the most difficult period of the war became one of the most widespread in Soviet propaganda. This was reflected both in historical research and on the pages of history textbooks both in the postwar period and later. However, the British government had good enough reasons not to rush to help the newly minted ally. First of all, at that time the outcome of the struggle on the Eastern Front remained completely unclear. "If Russia continues to resist, the supplies make sense," British Prime Minister W. Churchill wrote in his next message to the US President, "if not, we should not send them!" England's position on this issue is quite understandable - she herself lacked weapons. After the disaster near Dunkirk in May-June. 1940, in which the British Expeditionary Force lost almost all of its weapons, the newly created British army was catastrophically short of modern weapons. The needs of the Red Army were great - the bill went to hundreds of tanks and hundreds of aircraft every month. It is quite logical that Churchill first of all thought about his own country and his own army, especially since in the event of a catastrophe in Russia, England again had to be left face to face with all the might of Germany and its allies. Cher Chill suggested counting on America's colossal industrial potential: "... the Russians should turn to

USA for large long-term contracts. America, not

1 .
Great Patriotic War... S. 435.

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we must become the arsenal of the Russian army! However, even these "good British" intentions were not destined to come true - until the summer of 1942, deliveries to the USSR were carried out at the expense of British production itself and American deliveries to England, since America itself soon needed weapons in huge quantities. August 31, 1941 in Arkan-

Gelsk, the first British convoy arrived with cargo for the Red Army. It was very small and delivered only 49 aircraft, mines, torpedoes, bombs and ammunition. The meaning of this convoy was rather symbolic.

Even more difficult was the question of opening a second front. And the severity of this issue was directly related to the situation on the Soviet-German front. Each time after the heavy defeats of the Red Army, Stalin appealed to the Allies to speed up the opening of the second front. Already on July 18, 1941, he turned to W. Churchill: "The military situation of the Soviet Union, as well as Great Britain, would be significantly improved if a front was created against Hitler in the West (Northern France) and in the North (Arctic)" . Three days later, the English Premier replied that England was simply not in a position to start such actions: "the Chiefs of Staff do not see the possibility of doing anything on such a scale that it could bring you even the smallest benefit"². In September, when the German divisions were already moving towards Moscow, Stalin again returned to the question of a second front: "I think that there is only one way out of this situation: to create a second front somewhere in the Balkans or in France this year, capable of pulling 30-40 German divisions from the Eastern Front..." A few days later, Stalin, admitting the impossibility of such an operation, asks at least to land 25-30 divisions in Arkhangelsk or the southern regions of the USSR for joint operations with the Red Army? .

But the insistent appeals of the Soviet leader did not find the proper response, and this was later also interpreted as

1 Cited. Quoted from: The Great Patriotic War... S. 436. p Ibid.
Book 4. P. 218. 3 Ibid. pp.
218-219.

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desire to "pull chestnuts out of the fire with the wrong hands." Meanwhile, England was indeed unable to carry out a serious landing operation in Europe.

From the memoirs of Winston Churchill:

"The Russians have never in the least understood the nature of the landing operation required to land and hold a huge army on a well-defended enemy coast. Even Americans at the time were largely unaware of these difficulties. At the landing site, it was necessary to ensure not only dominance at sea, but also dominance in the air. There was also a third vital factor to be taken into account. The basis for a successful landing of any amphibious assault in the presence of strong enemy resistance should be the presence of a huge armada of specially designed landing craft, primarily various self-propelled tank barges. To create this armada, as it were and

will be shown, I have long been exerting all my efforts. Even a small armada could not have been ready before the summer of 1943, and a sufficiently powerful armada, as it is now generally recognized, could not have been created before 1944. During the period described, in the autumn of 1941, we did not have air supremacy over the territory of Europe occupied by the enemy, with the exception of the Pas de Calais, where the strongest German fortifications were located. Landing craft were still under construction. We didn't even have an army in England as large, as well trained and as well equipped as the one we had to face in France. And yet, to this day, whole streams of nonsense lies are erupted on the question of a second front. Of course, there was NOT the slightest hope of convincing the Soviet government, either then or at any other time. Subsequently, Stalin even once told me that if the British were afraid, he was ready to send three or four Russian army troops who would cope with this matter.

The British Prime Minister explained in great detail and patiently ———s=—

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| Churchill W. World War II. In 3 books / Abbreviated translation from English. - M.: Military Publishing, 1991. Book 2.T. 3-4. S. 174.

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This is in correspondence with Stalin. But the Soviet leader did not consider these arguments serious enough, believing that the British prime minister was only looking for an excuse to evade active action. This was a very characteristic feature of Stalin's behavior. Any military professional could understand the reasoning of the English prime minister. For the landing of 20-30 divisions, it was necessary to have an army two or three times larger than the expeditionary forces. The landing of such a mass of troops on the coast of the enemy required colossal preparations in terms of time and scale. It was necessary to prepare troops and equipment for landing and disembarkation, to concentrate (partly build) a whole armada of transport ships, special landing craft, warships and support aircraft, to ensure supremacy at sea and in the air in the landing area, and finally, to time the landing itself. to a period of stable weather conditions. With all this, it was necessary to observe the strictest secrecy and conduct a large-scale campaign of misinformation of the enemy. But that would not be all. The landing only made sense when the Allied armies were ready to wage a full-scale war in Europe in order to achieve victory. Needless to say, the scale and duration of preparations for such actions completely ruled out the carrying out of a landing operation within the next year. But Stalin reasoned not like a military professional, but like a politician. In Churchill's arguments, he saw only a lack of political will. Here Stalin was let down by his habit everywhere and in everything of relying on orders as the expressed political will, instead of professionalism. The next step in the development of allied relations

was the Moscow Conference of representatives of the three powers, which took place on September 29 - October 1, 1941. These days, the first phase of Operation Typhoon began near Moscow: breaking through the front of the Soviet defense, German tanks rushed to the capital. The Red Army lost a colossal amount of equipment, and it needed new tanks, planes, guns like air. The Soviet delegation presented the British and American representatives with lists of required weapons and equipment for

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period until July 1942. In total, the USSR expected to receive 600 aircraft, 750 tanks, 30,000 weapons per month.

tank guns, in addition to this, the list included metalworking machines, industrial plants, steel, non-ferrous metals. As a result of the discussion, the Allies agreed to supply the Soviet Union with 400 aircraft, 500 tanks, 152 anti-aircraft guns, 1,200 machine tools, 2,000 talumium, as well as tin, lead and other materials per month.

The first batch of cargo in accordance with the Moscow Protocol was delivered to the USSR at the end of October. Subsequently, deliveries were carried out almost according to the schedule and along several routes. The shortest and most economical of these was the northern sea route to Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, but it was the most dangerous due to the constant attacks of German aircraft and submarines. And yet, about 40% of the cargo was delivered via this route. The rest of the deliveries followed the Far East route (through the Pacific Ocean to Vladivostok) and along the southern route (through the Persian Gulf, Iran, the Caspian Sea). In November, the US government extended the Lend-Lease Act to the Soviet Union, which was granted an interest-free loan of \$1 billion to pay for supplies. The payment of payments to the USSR was to begin five years after the end of the war and be completed within 10 years.

In total, by July 1942, the Soviet Union received 3,296 aircraft out of 3,600 provided for by the Moscow Protocol, 4,697 tanks instead of the planned 4,500, 1,853 tankettes instead of 1,800. These tanks and aircraft, as well as other weapons, equipment and materials were delivered to the Soviet Union during the most difficult period of the struggle at the front. Hundreds of sailors from England, the USA and other countries sacrificed their lives delivering these cargoes to the Soviet Union.

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor and the possessions of England and the Netherlands in Southeast Asia, which put an end to American neutrality. On December 11, the United States declared war on

¹ See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S.436-437.

? There. S. 439.

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Germany and Italy. From now on, the Second World War has acquired a global character. This event brought Pozi closer together. tions of the USA, England and the USSR. The formation of the anti-Hitler coalition was completed by signing | January 1942 in Washington "Declaration of the United Nations" by representatives of 26 states that declared war on Germany. These included Australia, Belgium, Great Britain, Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, Greece, Dominican Republic, India, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Nika Ragua, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Poland , El Salvador, USSR, USA, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and South African Union. The declaration stressed that a complete victory over the enemies was necessary "<... to protect life, liberty, independence and religious freedom and to preserve human rights and justice..." and that they "<... are now engaged in a common struggle against the wild and brutal forces seeking to conquer the world ... ". The states that signed the declaration pledged to use all their resources in the struggle against Germany and her allies, to cooperate with each other and not to conclude a separate armistice or peace with enemies. The Declaration was open to accession by other states, provided that its principles were recognized. By the end of the war, there were 53 states in the anti-Hitler coalition.

The declaration was signed in the days when the counter-offensive of the Red Army near Moscow was already unfolding in full force. The long-awaited successes of Soviet weapons, confidence in the coming turning point in the course of the war influenced the position of Soviet diplomacy. The Allies enthusiastically assessed the results of the Soviet counter-offensive. General D. MacArthur called the battle of wu near Moscow "the most colossal achievement in history in terms of its scale and grandeur"! It seemed that a radical turning point had come in the war with Germany and a series of victories for the antifascist coalition had begun, but the main trials for the allies were ahead.

The first and most terrible year of the war was coming to an end. Its results were disastrous. During the initial period

' See: Great Patriotic ... S. 444.

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During the war, the Red Army suffered severe defeats that predetermined the course of further events until the end of 1941. In less than six months, the enemy managed to capture the Baltic states, Belarus, Moldova, most of Ukraine, territories in Karelia, and a number of western regions of the Russian Federation. 42% of the country's population lived in the occupied territory, 63% of coal was mined, 58% of steel, 68% of cast iron, 60% of aluminum, 38% of grain were produced.

The most severe were the losses of the Soviet troops. According to

According to the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, published in 1993, in the period from June to December 1941, the Soviet armed forces lost 3,987.7 thousand soldiers and officers in killed, wounded and captured. At the same time, according to German data, during the same period only 3,906.7 thousand servicemen were captured². The loss of equipment was just as colossal. During the same period, the Red Army lost 20,500 tanks (72.7% of the total number of its available composition), 10,300 aircraft - 34.4% of the available ones, 10,100 guns and mortars - 59%³. The losses of the Wehrmacht turned out to be much less - in the first half of the year of the war on the Eastern Front, the German armed forces lost 831 thousand people killed, wounded and captured, the loss of equipment amounted to 3,730 tanks and 4,643 aircraft.

The Soviet armed forces suffered a number of heavy defeats. There were many reasons for this, but the surprise of the German attack was by no means the main one. The decisive factor was the superiority of the German army in the level of training, combat experience, and control system. The Red Army, having a significant superiority in the quantity, and in some cases the quality of weapons, was unable to realize this superiority. The reason for this was the imperfection of the system of training and control of the Soviet armed forces. The military-political leadership of the country, concentrating their efforts

! The seal of secrecy has been removed. Losses of the armed forces of the USSR in wars, combat. Actions and Military Conflicts: A Statistical Study. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1993. S. 152.

² See Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. P. 518. ³ See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 473-474.

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on an increase in the number of weapons, the development of new models of it, failed to create an effective system for training specialists and commanders. The development of communications, infrastructure, and logistics was fatally underestimated.

But the real "Achilles heel" of the Red Army was

an inefficient management system. On the eve of the war, so

The question of the supreme body for command and control of the armed forces and coordination of the activities of the branches of the armed forces remained unresolved. These issues had to be resolved already at the beginning of the war. Stalin, having found himself in the post of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, built his usual rigid managerial "vertical", but, not having the necessary experience and knowledge, made a number of miscalculations and mistakes both in organizing the command and control system and in adopting a number of specific operational and strategic decisions. The commanders of the fronts and armies, finding themselves in a situation of strict subordination and control, did not have the opportunity to protest or even to

to correct obviously erroneous decisions of the high command. In addition, the rigidity of the command and control system, the threat of reprisals fettered the initiative of the commanders, which made it very difficult to draw the necessary lessons. All these vices of the system were extremely aggravated by the professional weakness of its commanding staff at all levels.

In fact, it was necessary to re-form the highest command staff, freeing the troops from those who did not correspond to their functions.

All these factors, which did not allow the Red Army to effectively use the gigantic military-technical potential of the Soviet armed forces, created on the eve of the war, were a product of the Soviet military-political system. The catastrophic outbreak of the war quickly revealed hidden contradictions in the development of Soviet society on the eve of the war. The mass surrender of Red Army soldiers and commanders, numerous facts: collaborationism in the occupied territory revealed not only the instability of the morale of a part of society, but also the hidden potential of resistance to the regime.

However, on the whole, the measures taken on the eve of the war to

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the preparation of society for war yielded results. The Soviet regime was not only able to maintain complete control over the remaining unoccupied part of the country, but also to carry out a successful mobilization of the armed forces and a complete militarization of the economy and public life.

Numerous gross mistakes and miscalculations time after time put the Red Army on the brink of complete defeat. The Soviet system of administration stubbornly refused to learn the cruel lessons of the war.

From the speech of I.V. Stalin on the radio, July 3, 1941

"How could it happen that our glorious Red Army surrendered to the fascist troops a number of our cities and regions? ...this is mainly due to the fact that the war of fascist Germany against the USSR began under favorable conditions for the German troops and unfavorable for the Soviet troops. The fact is that the troops of Germany, as a country waging war, were already fully mobilized, and the 170 divisions thrown by Germany against the USSR and moved to the borders of the USSR were in a state of complete readiness, waiting only for a signal to march, while the Soviet the troops still needed to be mobilized and move closer to the borders. Of considerable importance here was the fact that fascist Germany unexpectedly and treacherously violated the non-aggression pact concluded in 1939 between it and the USSR, regardless of the fact that it would be recognized by the whole world as the attacking side. It is clear that our peace-loving country, not wanting to take the initiative to violate the pact, could not take the path of treachery ...".

The explanation that Stalin gave in his speech was not only a propaganda thesis addressed to Soviet society. Stalin really believed that the reason for the defeat was the unexpected attack of Germany. But the effect of this factor was exhausted by a few days of the beginning of the war, and the Red Army continued to suffer one crushing defeat after another. And then another explanation appeared - criminally mediocre generals. Repressions again fell upon the generals of the Red Army, 27 people became their victims -

1 1941. Documentation. Book 2. S. 450.

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more than a third of the total number (74 people) of generals and admirals who died and died in 1941'. And although the purges of the command staff continued, already in the autumn the German army stood at the walls of the capital, and again Stalin found an explanation for this.

From the report of I.V. Stalin at the solemn meeting of the Moscow Council of Working People's Deputies, November 6, 1941.

"Where are the reasons for the temporary military failures of the Red Army?

One of the reasons for the failure of the Red Army is the absence of a second front in Europe against the Nazi troops. The fact is that at present there are no armies of Great Britain or the United States of America on the European continent that would wage war on the German fascist troops, so that the Germans do not have to split up their forces and wage war on two fronts, on west and east ... Another reason for the temporary failures of our army is the lack of tanks and, to some extent, aviation. In modern warfare it is very difficult for infantry to fight without tanks and without sufficient air cover from the air. Our aviation is superior in quality to German aviation, and our glorious pilots have covered themselves with the glory of fearless fighters. (Applause). But we still have fewer planes than the Germans. Our tanks are superior in quality to German tanks, and our glorious tankers and artillerymen have more than once put to flight the vaunted German troops with their numerous tanks. (Applause.) But we still have several times fewer tanks than the Germans. This is the secret of the temporary success of the German army. It cannot be said that our tank industry is working poorly and is supplying our front with few tanks. No; it works very well and produces many excellent tanks. But the Germans are producing much more tanks, because they now have at their disposal not only their own tank industry, but also the industry of Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Holland and France. Without this circumstance, the Red Army would long ago have defeated the German army, which does not go into battle without

1 See Alexander Pechenkin. Generals died not only in battles//NVO,

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tanks and does not withstand the blow of our units if it does not have superiority in tanks ...".

Until the end of the first year of the war, the top military-political leadership of the country was unable to identify the real reasons for the defeats of the Red Army. Moreover, the success of the counter-offensive near Moscow created a false impression that the war had reached a turning point, which means that there was no longer any need to look for other reasons for the military weakness of the Red Army.

In reality, the Red Army was rescued each time by seemingly incalculable reserves. According to pre-war calculations, for the transition of the army and navy to the wartime states, it was necessary to call up 4,887 thousand people. K. | July 5350 thousand people were called up, of which over 505 thousand reserve officers. 733,200 horses, 234,000 motor vehicles and over 31,500 tractors were delivered from the national economy. In general, taking into account the decision of the State Defense Committee of August 11, 1941, by the end of 1941, after mobilization, more than 14 million people from the country's total mobilization resource of 20 million people were presented to the People's Commissariat of Defense. Was this more than enough to not only make up for the losses suffered, but also to form 48 new combined-arms armies in 1941? During the same period, just over 1.5 million people were mobilized into the armed forces in Germany, in addition to the 7.8 million mobilized by the beginning of the war in 1939?. These colossal Soviet reserves made possible the first success of the Red Army in the battle for Moscow, which was taken as proof of the efficiency of the Soviet command and command and control model. There was a feeling that a turning point had come and now the war would go differently. It took another whole year of the war for the Soviet leadership, headed by Stalin, to fully realize the need to change the existing model of command and control of troops and warfare in general.

TIV. Stalin about the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union. pp. 23-24. ? See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 400-410.

3 See: Müller-Gillebrand B. Land Army of Germany 1933-1945 G'. - M.: Izographus, Eksmo Publishing House, 2002. S. 704.

Part III
ATTEMPT TO BREAK

The events of the second year of the war in their totality are a very bizarre picture. The year began with the grandiose success of the Red Army near Moscow and the worst defeat of the Wehrmacht in the entire previous period of the war. The vector of confrontation between the parties has clearly begun to change its direction.

But just a few months later, the German army again achieved impressive successes that put the Soviet state

. gift to the brink of a new military catastrophe. The summer breakthrough of German troops to the Volga and the Caucasus was the culmination of Germany's successes on the Soviet front and at the same time put a limit to further advance to the east.

In national history curricula, in sections devoted to the Great Patriotic War, the events of 1942 are usually regarded as a kind of manifestation of tendencies that were determined at the very beginning of the war. The authors of textbooks, as a rule, focus on the defeats of the Red Army in the spring and summer of 1942, explaining them by the miscalculations of I.V. Stalin, who did not heed the advice of military professionals, thereby repeating the scheme of explanations for the unsuccessful start of the war. Thus, the most important events of the winter offensive of the Red Army, which was by no means a continuation of the counterattack near Moscow, are "bracketed out". In this regard, it seems quite reasonable and, most importantly, very promising from the cognitive point of view to pose the following series of questions. How did the Soviet military-political leadership assess the situation at the front in early 1942, and how justified were these assessments? What was the basis of the decision to launch a general offensive "on all fronts" with the aim of liberating Soviet territory in the coming year? What was common and different in causes

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defeats of the Soviet troops in 1941 and 1942? How did the features of the Soviet military-political system manifest themselves in the situation of the most severe defeats at the front and in the creation of the prerequisites for a radical change in the course of the war? What were the very prerequisites for the coming fracture? Combining these questions, we can formulate the key problem of this chapter - why did the Soviet system, despite the experience gained at the beginning of the war, allow a new large-scale military failure and what allowed it to turn the tide? The beginning of the new 1942, the success of the counter-offensive near Moscow promised the Soviet leadership favorable prospects - it seemed that a turning point had occurred in the course of the war, and the opponents had changed places. These sentiments were largely facilitated by the change in the composition of the forces of the opposing sides. In December 1941, after the Japanese attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor and the start of the Pacific War, Germany declared war on the United States. The most powerful military and economic potential of the new overseas adversary, thrown into the balance, essentially left Germany and its allies no chance of winning a protracted war against a number of the world's largest states. The situation on the Soviet-German front also changed markedly. The doctrine of "blitzkrieg", which was the basis of the entire German plan for war with the Soviet Union, suffered a complete collapse. The Wehrmacht failed to solve a single strategic task of the 1941 campaign. Moreover, the Soviet leadership managed to establish a new military and economic base in the east of the country,

which was bound to ensure colossal military superiority in the near future. The leadership of the country, the armed forces and society overcame the shock of the catastrophic start of the war. The army received the first 'precious experience of waging war against the strongest army in Europe. In this situation, almost all the advantages were on the side of the Soviet Union. And yet, in the summer of 1942, the country again found itself on the brink of a complete military catastrophe, and the country's leadership declared this with all frankness. At the end of the summer of 1942, when the German army, after new stunning victories, came out

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towards the Volga and the Caucasus, Germany reached the peak of her aggression in the east. But this was the height from which the Third Reich was to fall very soon. And the decisive blow was received from a seemingly already defeated enemy.

OFFENSIVE ON ALL FRONTS

The first and unexpected successes of the Red Army's winter counteroffensive were perceived by the Soviet high command as the beginning of a turn in the development of events on the entire Soviet-German front. In this setting, prospects

"The further course of the war seemed very optimistic.

From the memoirs of Marshal G.K. Zhukov:

"... In connection with the defeat of the Nazi troops near Moscow and the successes achieved during the counteroffensive, the Supreme Commander was optimistic. He believed that on other fronts the Germans would not withstand the blows of the Red Army, one had only to skillfully organize a breakthrough in their defense. This gave him the idea of launching a general offensive as quickly as possible on all fronts, from Lake Ladoga to the Black Sea.

On the evening of January 5, 1942, as a member of the Headquarters, I was summoned to the Supreme Commander to discuss the draft plan for the general offensive of the Red Army...

The idea of the Supreme High Command was as follows. And in view of the successful course of the counteroffensive of the troops of the western direction, the goal of the general offensive was to defeat the enemy on all fronts ... The transition to the general offensive was supposed to be carried out in an extremely short time. Having outlined this project, I.V. Stalin offered to speak in attendance

him.

"In the western direction," I reported, "where more favorable conditions have been created and the enemy has not had time to restore the combat capability of his units, we must continue the offensive. But for a successful outcome of the case, it is necessary to replenish the troops with personnel, military equipment and strengthen the reserve

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mi, primarily tank units. If we do not receive this reinforcement, the offensive cannot be successful.

As for the offensive of our troops near Leningrad and in the southwestern direction, there our troops are facing serious enemy defenses. Without the presence of powerful artillery weapons, they will not be able to break through the defenses, they themselves will be exhausted and suffer heavy, unjustified losses. I am in favor of reinforcing the fronts in the western direction and conducting a more powerful offensive here.

"We do not yet have the material resources sufficient to ensure the simultaneous offensive of all fronts," N.A. supported me. Voznesensky.

- I spoke with Tymoshenko, - said I.V. Stalin. "He is in favor of operating in the southwestern direction as well. It is necessary to grind the Germans faster so that they cannot advance in the spring. Who else would like to speak?"

There was no answer. Discussion of the proposals of the Supreme
it never happened.

Leaving the office, B.M. Shaposhnikov said:

- You argued in vain: this issue was decided in advance by the Supreme.

"Then why did they ask our opinion?"

"I don't know, I don't know, my dear!" replied Boris Mikhailovich, sighing heavily.

The plan of the Soviet Headquarters was initially based on incorrect calculations. The western direction was determined as the attacking direction, but the Western and Kalinin fronts did not have a significant superiority over the enemy, and only one 39th army was transferred from the Stavka reserve to reinforce them. The main reserves - three armies were sent to Leningrad. The main thing was a miscalculation in the general assessment of the balance of forces on the front: the Red Army did not yet have sufficient forces for such strikes - there were not enough artillery, tanks, aircraft, and especially ammunition, and the level of training of command personnel did not yet allow managing such large-scale operations.

1 Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. In 3 volumes. Volume 2. 10th ed. — M.: Izd-vo APN, 1990. S. 253-255.

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Apparently, the top military-political leadership

countries headed by Stalin have not yet realized the full depth of the true causes of the summer-autumn catastrophe, the full complexity and scale of the preparation and conduct of front-line operations. The real level of readiness of the Red Army to wage a modern war has not yet come to realization.

From the memoirs of General P.A. Belova:

"The defeat of the Nazis near Moscow, the successful pursuit of the retreating Nazis gave rise to an exaggerated idea of the capabilities of our troops among some military leaders and led to an underestimation of the enemy ... great victories without pausing before a new offensive operation. At Headquarters, the critical attitude towards the situation weakened, much was presented in a too rosy light. The desire to conduct large-scale operations increased, although the opportunities for this were by no means always present. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief began to lose his sense of proportion.

In mid-January 1942, on a huge front from the Baltic to the Black Sea, the Red Army launched a grandiose offensive. The forces of 34 armies of nine fronts were involved. The first attempt to liberate the occupied Soviet lands began. The main blow was to be delivered near Moscow. The configuration of the front line in this direction remained extremely advantageous for the Soviet side. The formations of the Northwestern and Kalinin fronts from the north, and the Western and Bryansk fronts from the south, dangerously hung over the flanks of Army Group Center, which created the prerequisites for its deep encirclement. The Headquarters of the Supreme High Command planned to "encircle and then capture or destroy" the Rzhev-Vyazma enemy grouping, which formed the basis of the Army Group Center, in the western direction. The Kalinin Front was to strike in the direction of Rzhev and Vyazma, the Western Front in the direction of Yukhnov and Vyazma. Together they must

\ Belov P. A. Moscow is behind us. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1963. S. 171.

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were to solve the problem. Their actions were provided by the North-Western Front under the command of General P.A. Kurochkin, who, with his right flank, was supposed to defeat the enemy grouping in the Demyansk area, and with his left flank, bypass the Rzhev-Vyazma grouping from the west, cutting off its retreat. :

The offensive of the Soviet troops began successfully. On January 9, the armies of the Northwestern Front went on the offensive. On January 15, units of the 4th shock army of General A.I. Eremenko captured the city of Andreapol, and by January 21 they reached the Western Dvina, finding themselves in the rear of Army Group Center. On January 6-7, the strike group of the Kalinin Front - the 29th and 39th armies - broke through

enemy defenses west of Rzhev and, having divided the German 6th Army Corps into two parts, began a rapid advance south towards Vyazma. The command of the Western Front, using the 100-kilometer gap in the enemy's defense created back in December - January, introduced the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps of General P.A. Belov, sending him to Yukhnov, and then to Vyazma. The offensive of the 33rd Army under the command of General M.G. Efremov, which cut the communications of the 20th German Army Corps and went deep into the German defenses. General G. Göpner ordered the 20th Corps to retreat to reserve positions, for which he was removed from his post by Hitler and expelled from the army forever. But the Führer still had to give the order to withdraw the troops of the Army Group Center to the rear positions - the German formations left a line 350 km long.

In the Soviet Headquarters, the withdrawal of the enemy was perceived as. confirmation of the correctness of the original plan - the enemy is suppressed, in complete confusion and panic leaves the position. Now the main thing is decisive action to pursue and defeat its main forces. Stalin ordered the Kalinin Front with formations of the 39th Army to prevent the enemy from withdrawing and at the same time to move the 11th Cavalry Corps to Vyazma in order to cut the Moscow-Minsk communications. At that time, the 33rd Army of the Western Front was advancing from the southeast towards Vyazma. To assist Kalinin

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to the Western and Western fronts, surrounded by the Rzhev-Vyazma groupings of the enemy Headquarters decides for the first time to use the airborne troops. 4th Airborne Corps Neral V.A. Glazunov was given the task of landing southwest of Vyazma and cutting off the enemy's main communications between Vyazma and Smolensk, preventing his troops from withdrawing to the west.

The Stavka's plan was distinguished by its scale and decisiveness. A real opportunity arose for the first time to carry out a classic operation to encircle a powerful enemy task force. The very concept of the operation was quite consistent with the spirit of the "deep operation" theory developed in the 1930s. VC. Triandafillov and M.N. Tukhachevsky.

The advance of the Soviet shock groups put the German troops on the brink of disaster. According to German researchers of the history of the war in Russia, at that moment, despite all the efforts of the German command, Army Group Center could no longer be saved. But on one condition - if it were opposed by "an enemy who knows how to use his advantages"! However, the Soviet military command was not yet able to use the advantages of the position obtained by such labor. At the decisive moment, the Headquarters and the command of the fronts make a number of fatal mistakes. In the midst of the battle, the Headquarters begins a large-scale regrouping of forces. The 3rd and 4th shock armies of the Northwestern Front were reassigned to the command of the Kalinin Front, and for compensation from

On the Western Front, the 1st Shock Army is withdrawn and transferred to the North-Western Front, the consequence of this "castling" is a sharp reduction in offensive capabilities in the main direction of attack.

From the memoirs of Marshal G.K. Zhukov:

"On January 16 and 17, the troops of the right wing of the front, with the assistance of partisan detachments, occupied Lotoshino, Shakhovskaya and cut the Moscow-Rzhev railway. It would seem that the

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Cit. In: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. military history
sky essays. - Book 1. M., 1998. S. 287-288.

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but here it was necessary to build up strength for the development of success. But it turned out differently.

On January 19, an order was received from the Supreme Commander-in-Chief to withdraw the 1st Shock Army from the battle to the Stavka reserve. Cape V.D. Sokolovsky turned to the General Staff with a request to leave the 1st shock army with us. There was only one answer - this is the order of Ver
goddamn.

I personally call I, V. Stalin.

I explain that the withdrawal of this army will lead to a weakening of the strike force.

In response I hear:

- Get out without any talk. You have a lot of troops, consider how many armies you have.

I try to answer:

"Comrade Supreme Commander-in-Chief, our front is very wide, fierce battles are going on in all directions; excluding the possibility of rearrangements. I ask you not to withdraw the 1st Shock Army from the right wing of the Western Front until the completion of the offensive that has begun, and not to weaken the pressure on the enemy in this sector.

Instead of answer`I:V. Stalin hung up. Negotiations with B.M. Shaposhnikov also has nothing to do with this
led.

"Darling," said B.M. Shaposhnikov, - I can't do anything, this is a personal decision of the Supreme.

I had to stretch the 20th Army on a wide front. The weakened troops of the right wing of the front, approaching Gzhatsk, were stopped by the enemy's defenses and could not advance further.

But in fairness, it should be noted that the commander of the Western Front, General of the Army G.K. Zhukov, clearly overestimating his capabilities, pursued the prospect of a grandiose encirclement near Vyazma, abandoning modest but real results. The Cavalry Corps of General Belov, operating in the rear of the enemy, reached the only supply line for the German 4th Field Army. If con

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: Zhukov G.K. Decree. op. S. 260.

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Belov's nicknames blocked this road, the fate of the entire 4th Army would be sealed. But "something like a miracle happened on the southern flank of the 4th Army," General G. Blumentritt later recalled. "It was not clear to us why the Russians, despite their advantage in this sector of the front, did not cut the Yukhnov-Maloyaroslavets road and did not deprive the 4th Army of its only supply route. At night, Belov's cavalry corps, which caused us so much trouble in the second half of December, advanced in our rear towards Yukhnov. This corps reached the communications vital to us, but, fortunately, did not cut it. He continued to advance in a western direction and disappeared somewhere in the huge Bogoroditsky swamps.

This "miracle" was explained by the fact that Belov's Cavalry Corps received a strict order from G.K. Zhukov to break through to Vyazma at the connection with the 33rd Army, advancing from Naro-Fominsk. The front command set out to encircle two enemy armies at once - the 4th and 9th. On January 27, the Cavalry Corps broke through the Minsk-Moscow highway and on January 30 reached Vyazma. By February 1, three rifle divisions of the 33rd Army made their way there. It was into this paradise that the paratrooper units of the 4th Airborne Corps were thrown. It seemed that this time the success was close. 12 infantry and cavalry divisions, five ski battalions, an airborne brigade and a number of partisan formations were concentrated around Vyazma. On February 2, Belov's cavalry and General Efremov's infantrymen began an assault on Vyazma from two sides. In early February 1942, the Soviet high command finally believed that the enemy was close to defeat.

From the order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 5 \$, February 23, 1942:

"Now the Germans no longer have that military advantage that they had in the first months of the war as a result of a treacherous and sudden attack. The moment of surprise and surprise, as a reserve of the German fascist troops, was completely used up. Thus, the inequality in

1 Fatal decisions of the Wehrmacht. - Rostov n / D .: Publishing house "Phoenix", 1999. S. 184. -

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conditions of war, which was created by the surprise of the German fascist attack. Now the fate of the war will be decided not by such an incidental moment as the moment of surprise, but by constantly acting factors: the strength of the rear, the morale of the army, the number and quality of divisions, the armament of the army, the organizational skills of the commanding staff of the army. At the same time, one circumstance should be noted: it was enough for the moment of surprise to disappear into the arsenal of the Germans, so that the fascist German army would face a catastrophe ...

Under the mighty blows of the Red Army, the German troops, rolling back to the west, suffer huge losses in men and equipment. They cling to every line, trying to push back the day of their defeat. But the efforts of the enemy are in vain. The initiative is now in our hands, and the efforts of Hitler's loose, rusty machine cannot hold back the onslaught of the Red Army. The day is not far off when the Red Army, with its mighty blow, will drive back the brutal enemies from Leningrad, clear the cities and villages of Belarus and Ukraine, Lithuania and Latvia, Estonia and Karelia from them, liberate the Soviet Crimea, and all Soviet land will again be victorious. fly red banners.

But for some time, both Headquarters and G.K. Zhukov, under whose command the troops of the Western and Kalinin fronts were united, had already made a number of mistakes that aggravated the initial miscalculations. Instead of subordinating all the forces operating near Vyazma, senior lieutenant general M.G. Efremov, Zhukov retained direct leadership of individual formations. Controlling them by radio DIO from a distance of hundreds of kilometers, he sternly demanded to continue the assault on the city, not stopping before the execution of "all cowards, alarmists, provocateurs." At the same time, despite all the cruel intransigence of their demands, the front command failed to solve the most important task of supporting the troops with aviation, supplying them with food and ammunition. Instead, instructions were given to look for food

TI.V. Stalin about the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union. - M., 1946. S. 35-36. ; Cit. In: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 296.

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Wie and shells in place. But still, the main omission of the command was that the flanks were not secured in the place where the enemy's defense line was breached in order to maintain communication with the troops that had broken through behind enemy lines. For some reason, the front commander entrusted this task to M.G. Efremov, However, this was completely beyond his power. Commander 33-

The army, being by that time deep behind enemy lines, a hundred kilometers behind the front line, could under no circumstances solve this problem.

On February 4, the Germans restored the front and cut communications with the troops of Efremov and Belov, who still continued to storm Vyazma. But under the circumstances, attempts to capture the city became meaningless. The Germans, having retained in their hands the railway and highway Moscow -

`Smolensk, freely transferred reserves and without labor

Yes, they repelled numerous attacks. And the Soviet troops from surrounding turned into encircled. The commanders of the Soviet formations, having practically no artillery, tanks, air support, not even having enough ammunition, were forced to throw bleeding rifle companies into the attack.

The German command, with cold calculation, continued to strike at the most vulnerable places of the enemy. On February 6, the enemy struck at the communications of the 29th Army of the Kalinin Front, which was advancing on Rzhev. On February 17, the encirclement around this army also closed. Only about 5,200 people from among the encircled managed to break through to their own. The troops near Vyazma were able to hold out longer. Fulfilling the order of the Headquarters, they held their area for another two months. The order to leave the encirclement was received only in April, but by that time the 33rd Army had already been divided into small groups, only about 700 people left the encirclement. General M.G. Efremov was wounded three times and, not wanting to be captured, shot himself. In an organized manner, only parts of the Cavalry Corps P.A. managed to break through from the ring. Belov and the paratroopers, in July 1942 they went beyond the front line.

An attempt at a grandiose encirclement near Vyazma failed

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lass. Moreover, a number of Soviet units got into the encirclement. The offensive of the Red Army more and more turned into protracted and bloody battles of local importance - for individual towns and villages. "It became more and more difficult for the overworked and weakened troops to overcome the resistance of the enemy," recalled G.K. Zhukov. - Our repeated reports and proposals on the need to stop and gain a foothold on the achieved levels were rejected by the Headquarters. On the contrary, by a directive of March 20, 1942, the Supreme Commander again demanded that the fulfillment of the previously set task be carried out more energetically!

But for some time the offensive lost all prospect of success. The enemy has long since recovered from the first blows and has concentrated the necessary reserves in the western direction. The troops, following Hitler's order, turned the populated areas into powerful defense centers. Artillery and aviation support was needed to capture them, but they were not available. Obes-

the Soviet command was unable to bake air cover for its strike units in the depths of the German defense.

From the memoirs of Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky:

"It was no longer possible to continue the offensive with the forces available to us by that time, counting on a decisive breakthrough of the enemy's defenses and the further development of success. The moment had come when our High Command, too, should have thought about making use of the results gained and begun serious preparations for the summer campaign of 1942.

Unfortunately, this did not happen, and the troops, following the order, continued to advance. Moreover, the command of front Ta was given the task of exhausting the enemy without giving him any respite. This was what was incomprehensible to me. It is one thing to wear down the enemy with defensive actions, seeking to equalize forces, which is what we did before going over to the counteroffensive. But in order to exhaust and weaken it with offensive actions with a clear balance of forces not in our favor, and even in harsh winter conditions, I could not understand this at all ...

: Zhukov G.K. Decree op. S. 266.

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Our infantry, advancing in thin chains, had to move through deep snow under heavy fire ... Even without seeing the enemy, that is, long before the attack, our heroic, but exhausted infantry was exhausted and suffered heavy losses. The front headquarters did not skimp on directives, instructions and instructions that encouraged activity and explained how to act and quickly overcome enemy resistance in various conditions ...

The question involuntarily arose in me, and in many others: why do our Supreme High Command, the General Staff, and even the command of the front continue aimless offensive operations? summer operations, but we continue to wear down not so much the enemy as ourselves in a hopeless offensive? This was the grossest mistake of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. and the General Staff!

The attempts of the Soviet fronts to continue the offensive ended only at the end of April. The overall result of the winter offensive was the advance of units of the North-Western Front in the Vitebsk direction by 250 km, the formations of the Western Front advanced by 80-100 km. But the main objective of the offensive—the defeat of the forces of Army Group Center in the area of Vyazma and Rzhev—was not accomplished. The losses of the Red Army were exceptionally great. During the battle near Moscow, the losses of the Soviet troops amounted to 1,805,923 people, of which 926,244 people were irretrievable, 4,171 tanks, 983 aircraft, 21,478 guns and mortars were lost. Wehrmacht losses near Moscow

put 615 thousand people killed and wounded-.

Winter offensive near Leningrad. During the December counter-offensive near Moscow, the idea of de-blockade of Leningrad was born at the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. And this time the offensive plan was distinguished by boldness and scale. As near Moscow, the configuration of the front line created the conditions for deep envelopment and encirclement of the enemy.

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Rokossovsky K.K. Soldier duty. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1997. S. 165-168.
2 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 303.

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It was planned by joint actions of two fronts - Leningrad (commander - General M.S. Khozin) and Volkhov (commander - General K.A. Meretskov) with convergent attacks on Lyuban to surround and destroy the opposing enemy grouping and further go to the rear of the troops blockading Leningrad. The Northwestern Front (commander - General P.A. Kurochkin) was supposed to provide its right flank for operations near Leningrad. In early January 1942, the troops launched an offensive, but it did not bring success due to insufficient preparedness. The 54th Army of the Leningrad Front (commanded by General I.I. Fedyuninsky), advancing towards the troops of the Volkhov Front, turned out to be too weak to break through the powerful enemy defenses. The actions of the 2nd shock army were also extremely unsuccessful, its commander, General G.G. Sokolov failed to prepare the army for the offensive.

On January 13, the offensive resumed, and after 12 days of the hardest fighting in the conditions of a wooded and swampy area, the enemy defenses were finally broken through. The troops of the 2nd Shock Army (commander - Lieutenant General N.K. Klykov) advanced 70 km, formations of the 54th Army made their way towards them, only about 40 km remained to go. But there were not enough forces to encircle the Lyuban grouping of the enemy. The Soviet command once again overestimated its own forces and underestimated the difficulty of conducting such a large-scale encirclement operation. On the contrary, the German command managed to transfer reserves and bomber aircraft to the threatened sector and, in accordance with their favorite scheme, struck at the flanks of the advancing 2nd shock army, closing the encirclement. The situation near Vyazma was practically repeated - surrounding the enemy, the Soviet troops themselves were surrounded. The results of this operation were quite comparable with the Vyazma operation - the losses of the Soviet troops amounted to 325,700 people, of which 95,064 were irretrievable. But the command

The blowing troops of the Volkhov Front managed to break through again

1 See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century: Statistical study. — M.: OLMA-PRESS, 2001, S. 311.

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enemy defense near the village of Myasnoy Bor and provide a narrow corridor of 3-5 km for communication with the 2nd Army. The position of the army remained extremely difficult - ammunition, food and all supplies had to be delivered by hand (!)

.for 20-30 km. Further actions of the Soviet troops in the Luban direction were paralyzed, and by the end of April, active hostilities had to be stopped.

The most successful during this period were the actions of the North-Western Front (commander - General P.A. Kurochkin). The successes of the front were explained by a significant superiority in forces over the enemy - in the directions of the main attack it reached three or four times. With its left wing, the front managed to advance and deeply encircle the flank of Army Group Center, and by the end of February 1942, with its right wing, encircle the enemy's Demyansk grouping. This was the first encirclement of a large enemy grouping during the Great Patriotic War - six German divisions with a total number of 96 thousand people were in the cauldron! The encirclement near Demyansk created the prerequisites for the defeat of the entire Army Group North.

But this time too, a number of mistakes were made. First of all, again grossly underestimated the enemy. Already during the preparation of the offensive, the 34th Army (commander - General N.E. Berzarin), intended for the direct encirclement and destruction of the Demyansk group, turned out to be the weakest in the front, yielding to the enemy in men in 1.3 and artillery 2, | times. They tried to compensate for the weakness of the army with tactical innovations. So, for the first time during the war, an attempt was made at night assault using anti-aircraft searchlights (the same technique was used much later, already in April 1945, by Marshal G.K. Zhukov during the assault on the Seelow Heights near Berlin).

From the memoirs of a participant:

"At one in the morning, the Katyusha hit, searchlights flashed, blinding the village of Yamnik, where the Germans had concentrated artillery, and our battery also hit it. And burst out of the loudspeaker

1 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 307.

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"Internationale" over a snowy field. Tanks (there were several of them, painted white for camouflage) moved, the infantry went. But our intelligence did not know that the Germans had an anti-tank ditch dug. You can't dig it out in the cold, so you missed it. The tanks reached the ditch, then one by one they

burned down. The infantry lay down, the mortars hit it, the searchlights shine, the loudspeakers didn't stop at once, they still thundered victoriously over the field: "Get up, branded with a curse ..." And curses rushed from the headquarters along the wires: again the infantry lay down! And how many wounded were frozen in the snow that night..."

However, tactical innovations could not replace the elementary organization of the offensive. It was not possible to encircle and break the resistance of the Demyansk group on the move. And then everything depended on the transfer of reserves. And again the enemy outplayed the Soviet military leaders. The German command was able to organize the delivery of ammunition, food and even replenishment, as well as the evacuation of the wounded by air. In March 1942 alone, German aviation, having made over 3 thousand flights to the pocket area, transferred 24.3 thousand tons of cargo and 15,446 people and took out 22,093 wounded from there, while losing 262 transport aircraft?. The preservation of the supply of the encircled grouping allowed it to create a solid defense and prevent the dismemberment of its battle formations. Moreover, by the end of April, the enemy, having concentrated a strike group of five divisions under air cover, achieved an eightfold superiority and broke through a large encirclement, creating a corridor 6-8 km wide (the so-called "Ramushev corridor"), which made it possible to continue the fight for many more years. months, having fettered the powerful grouping of the Red Army.

From the memoirs of the German physician Hans Killian:

"... the Russians knew their land, they were familiar with winter. The Reds quite calmly waited until the rivers and swamps freeze, and then, under the protection of the fog, attached

p rigory Baklanov. North-Western Front / Collected Works in five volumes. St. Petersburg, 2003. V.5. S. 41.

b See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 308.

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In the bitter cold they broke forward between two villages. And immediately they began to widen the road right in the middle of our front line. A real catastrophe broke out in this place ... Six German divisions were surrounded near Demyansk. The Russians triumphed, thinking that they would be able to quickly crush the encircled Germans. A huge delusion - the jubilation turned out to be premature. The command of the encircled divisions was taken over by Count Brockdorf, an old warrior. The soldiers so called the surrounded territory - "Brockdorf County" - and zealously defended it. The Russians furiously attacked from all sides and fell under the impact of shells... I tried to climb a high slope to look at Staraya Russa from afar... and froze in horror when I saw the picture that opened up to my eyes. Before me stretched my vast field, littered with the bodies of the dead. Thousands and thousands of Russians

perished, mowed down by our machine-gun fire. Snow covered the bodies of the fallen, but then the wind swept it away and exposed them. All around, stiff arms, legs, knees are rising upwards ... "".

Stavka's plans on the southern flank of the Soviet-German front also provided for an offensive with decisive goals. The troops of the South-Western (commander - General F.Ya. Kostenko) and the Southern Fronts (commander - General R.Ya. Malinovsky) were united in the South-Western direction under the command of Marshal S.K. Timoshenko. It was planned by joint strikes of the adjacent flanks of both fronts; breaking through the defenses, go to the rear of the entire Donbass grouping, press it to the Sea of Azov and destroy it. In addition, the troops of the Southwestern Front were to strike at Krasnograd and liberate Kharkov. Thus, here, too, the Headquarters planned an extremely complex and large-scale operation, in which the flanks of neighboring fronts were supposed to interact, and all the experience of the war by that time showed that

1 Killian Hans. In the shadow of victory German surgeon on the Eastern Front. 1941-1943 / Translated from English. S.V. Babak. - M.: ZAO Tsentrpoligraf, 2005. S. 170-171, 197.

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it is interaction, especially such a large-scale one at the level of the fronts, that is the weakest point of the Soviet control system. In addition, here, too, the troops of the Soviet fronts did not have a decisive advantage over the enemy. In terms of the number of infantry and tanks, the ratio was approximately equal, and only in aviation there was a 1.4 times superiority. In terms of the number of guns and mortars, the enemy outnumbered the Soviet troops by 1.2 times, and by 4.5 times in anti-tank artillery.

The offensive began on January 18, and six days later the troops of the Southern Front captured the important communication center of the city of Barvenkovo. But in other areas, the breakthrough happened. Field Marshal F. Bock, Commander of Army Group South! began urgently pulling reserves to the place of the breakthrough. And again, as near Moscow and Leningrad, everything was decided by the speed of the transfer of reserves, the possibility of withdrawing them from other sectors of the front. The Soviet command was unable to impede the movement of enemy reserves, although during the summer-autumn campaign of 1941 the Wehrmacht brilliantly showed how this task could be solved. Frontal aviation strikes, landings, deep penetrations of tank and motorized formations disrupted the advance of Soviet reserves, which did not allow the command of the Red Army to block the breakthroughs of German troops and prevent encirclement. :

Entering the battle by Marshal S.K. Timoshenko's front-line reserves made it possible to move forward and capture the large railway station of Lozovaya. Encouraged by this success, the Supreme Commander ordered both fronts to cut enemy communications and seize bridgeheads on

Right bank of the Dnieper. But this order already went beyond all conceivable limits of the real. The troops ran out of steam, the offensive in the south stalled, forming a deep so-called Barvenovsky ledge of the front line to the west, almost 90 km deep and about 100 km wide. This ledge had a dual meaning - on the one hand, the Soviet troops occupied an advantageous position

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In January 1942, F. Bock took command of the Army Group "South"

instead of Field Marshal G. Rundstedt, Bock was released by Hitler from

manipulating the Center group after the failure of the attack on Moscow.

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to strike at the flank and rear of the enemy, and on the other hand, they themselves were under the threat of a possible encirclement. And now everything depended on the military skill of the opposing sides. In the meantime, the opponents went on the defensive, preparing for a new spring-summer campaign.

The reasons for the unsuccessful actions during the winter offensive were quite obvious. Both the Headquarters and the front command failed to correctly assess the balance of forces. The old disease of the Soviet system of governance, "dizziness from success," made itself felt, and the impossible began to seem quite achievable. And as a result, the enemy's capabilities were unjustifiably underestimated, while their own, on the contrary, were overestimated. Attacks on the enemy were delivered on a wide front, moreover, by dispersed forces. The Soviet command failed to correctly assess the situation, although reconnaissance had previously revealed the regrouping and concentration of enemy troops. As a result, the necessary defense in depth was not created in the direction of the most probable enemy strike. The Soviet military leaders were not yet able to plan, organize and conduct powerful counterattacks. The command of the Wehrmacht still maintained an overwhelming superiority in the art of leading troops.

Offensive in the Crimea. The plan for the winter offensive, approved by the Soviet Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, provided for another large-scale offensive - on the Crimean Peninsula. Its main goal was to capture the Kerch Peninsula by the troops of the Transcaucasian Front (commander - General D.T. Kozlov) and create conditions for the liberation of the Crimea. Like the plans of other fronts, the plan of General D.T. Kozlov was of great scope. For the first time, it was envisaged to land large landing forces on the Azov and Black Sea coasts of the Kerch Peninsula and in Kerch itself, to encircle and destroy the enemy grouping. Together with the Transcaucasian Front, the forces of the Black Sea Fleet and

Azov military flotilla.

At the end of December 1941, the 11th army of General E. Manstein began the assault on Sevastopol, and soon the position of the besieged

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fortress became critical. Sevastopol was saved by the reserves transferred from Novorossiysk and Tuapse, but the main thing was that on December 26 the landing of Soviet troops on the Kerch Peninsula began. Neither the Black Sea Fleet nor the Azov Flotilla had special landing craft. Everything that was at hand was used - motor boats, seiners, dredgers, scows, longboats and even boats. Of course, none of these floating craft could take heavy equipment on board. But these improvised landing aids were also lacking, each of them was overloaded beyond measure. When, on the night of December 26, a caravan with a landing party on board went to sea, a severe storm broke out. (This was the first, but by no means the last, time that the weather changed dramatically immediately after the start of the Red Army offensive, which naturally raises the question of the extent to which weather forecasts were used in planning operations.) The temperature dropped sharply, waves the caravan was quickly scattered, some of the boats and longboats with paratroopers in tow were lost and perished. The ships that reached the landing sites were unable to land troops on the shore due to the formed crust of ice. The paratroopers jumped into the water and, UNDER the fire of all enemy fire weapons, made their way to the shore, people were covered by a wave, many immediately drowned, the clothes of those who managed to get ashore instantly froze. In these monstrous conditions, by the end of the day, 3,000 people were landed, more than 4,000 people died during the landing, most of them could not reach the shore!

By the end of December 28, up to 14,000 fighters and commanders had been transferred to the captured bridgeheads. In the last days of December, the Kerch Strait froze over, and the remaining troops were able to cross without interference. The landing party met fierce resistance from units of the 46th German division located in Kerch, and only the landing behind enemy lines, in Feodosia, of a new Soviet landing force turned the tide. The landing at Feodosia on 29 December was unprecedented in concept and execution. The ships of the Black Sea Fleet landed troops directly on the

ports of the port. The first echelon was landed on boats under the

' See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 312.

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covering fire 2 cruisers and 3 destroyers, and then the cruisers and destroyers themselves, entering the port, landed troops on its berths. In po.

the next three days, the ships of the fleet transported three rifle divisions to Feodosia - 23 thousand soldiers and officers, 34 tanks and 150 guns.

From the memoirs of Field Marshal E. Manstein:

"The 46th Infantry Division entered the Paryzh Isthmus with a forced march. But at the same time, she had to leave most of her guns on icy roads. In addition, its personnel were completely exhausted by the hardships of this retreat ... If the enemy had used the advantage of the situation that had arisen and would quickly pursue the 46th Infantry Division from Kerch, and also hit decisively after the Romanians retreating from Feodosia, then a situation hopeless not only for this newly emerged section of the Eastern Front of the 11th Army. The fate of the entire 11th Army would be decided. A more resolute enemy could have paralyzed the entire supply of the armies with a swift breakthrough on Dzhan-Koy. The troops withdrawn from Sevastopol - the 170th Infantry Division, and after the cessation of the offensive from the north and the 132nd Infantry Division - could arrive in the area west or northwest of Feodosiya not earlier than in 14 days.

But the enemy did not manage to use the favorable moment. Either the enemy command did not realize its advantages in this situation, or it did not dare to use them immediately. From the operational maps we captured, it was clear that the 44th Army, which had landed at Feodosia, had only one goal - to reach the area west and northwest of the city of Star Krym by January 4 with the six divisions at its disposal by that time, in order to then take up defense at the milestone reached. Apparently, even having a triple superiority in strength, the enemy did not dare to launch a bold deep operation that could lead to the defeat of the 11th Army.

In early January, the Headquarters finally figured out the situation and demanded that the command of the Caucasian Front (from 30

1 Manstein E. Lost victories. - M.: AST Publishing House, 2002. S. 257.

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In October, the Transcaucasian Front was renamed the Caucasian Front) of the offensive towards Perekop. The troops of the front in the Crimea received additional reserves, their total number reached 181 thousand people, but the offensive still failed. The main reason for this was the monstrous confusion that arose in the rear of the landing group. There was a complete lack of experience in such large-scale landing operations and a depressingly constant misunderstanding of the role of planning and organization of the rear. The navy, not having received from the army command an exact plan of transportation, could not, in spite of all its intense activity, ensure the timely delivery of the necessary cargo. As a result, loading and unloading points were cluttered with excess equipment, and the troops did not

got what they needed. Bulky front-line institutions, reserve regiments, and even front-line courses for command personnel were transported to the peninsula, and the troops lacked the most necessary - food and ammunition. Many units that landed in the Crimea found themselves completely without rear units, transport and communications, all this remained in the ports of the Caucasian coast. The landing troops did not have a single hospital - the nearest one was in the Kuban. The wounded fighters, having received the initial dressing, went to Kerch, from where they had to get to Novorossiysk '. It is noteworthy that this inability to organize the work of the rear was known to Soviet military leaders even before the war, but, as usual, no conclusions were drawn.

From the speech of Lieutenant General Ya.N. Fedorenko at a meeting of the officers of the Red Army:

"Raising the alarm connection showed that when you drive 30-40 km from the location of the unit, you need to drive back for five days and pick up what you need, but not taken, and take back what was taken, but unnecessary. You need to calculate in advance what the car should carry. When checking the cars that came out, it turned out that all the cars, as a rule, were underloaded by 300-500 kg, and there are such

machines that can hold three tons, and they are loaded with NY See: Beshanov V.V.

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The year 1942 is "training". Minsk, 2002, p. 163.

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one ton. As a result, the commanders say that there are not enough cars. It is necessary in advance, even in peacetime, to calculate what to load for each car, how much to load, and then we will have a much smaller rear and instead of a shortage there will be many superfluous cars!

The most important role in ensuring the activities of the landing was played by the Feodosia port - the largest of the available ones. The outcome of the entire operation depended on its successful work, but the front command did not provide for its protection with the necessary air defense systems. The enemy, on the contrary, having quickly assessed the importance of the Feodosia port, threw his strike aircraft at it. As a result, from the very beginning of the operation, the port found itself under constant attacks by enemy bombers, which sank five transports in the first week alone, the number of which in the Black Sea Fleet was already one. A number of warships received heavy damage.

The command of the Caucasian Front also made a number of other miscalculations, the most difficult of which was the refusal to create a solid defense on the captured lines in anticipation of an imminent offensive. Contrary to all the instructions and the mouth of you, the troops did not create any defensive positions, or even a system of fire, continuous reconnaissance and outposts. On the-

Chief of Staff of the Engineering Troops of the Red Army, General I.P. Galitsky, having inspected the positions of the troops, found that "there was no separation [of defense] in depth. They had not even thought about building an army rear line. Ak-Monai positions represent a thin line of 30% destroyed from an anti-tank ditch (erected back in August-November 1941) and wire fences with a small number of pillboxes ... Separate rifle cells were opened in the subunits ... Front line mines are not covered ... the commanders of subunits and units believe that there is no need to dig in, since they will have to go on the offensive soon"?;

1 Russian archive: Meetings of the top command and political personnel of the Red Army... S. 41. 2 Ibid. S. 165.

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The enemy immediately took advantage of this miscalculation. On January 18, he recaptured Feodosia and forced the Soviet units to retreat to the Ak-Monai Isthmus. The Stavka is once again taking measures to change the situation in Crimea. At the end of January 1942, the troops that occupied the Kerch Peninsula were united into the Crimean Front under the command of Lieutenant General D.T. Kozlov. A representative of the Headquarters of the All-Russian Supreme Command, Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, head of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army, army commissar of the 1st rank L.3 was sent to "strengthen" the command in the Crimea. Mekhlis. As usual, Lev Zakharovich developed a stormy activity. The culprits were found right there. A number of commanders, including the commanders of the 9th Rifle Corps, the 236th Rifle Division, the 63rd Mountain Rifle Division, and others, were brought to trial by a military tribunal. A new chief of staff of the front and commander of the front aviation were appointed, the composition of the Military Council of the front and the composition of the Military Councils of all three armies of the front were changed. The front commander also received a very unflattering assessment of Mekhlis: "We caught the most unsightly picture of the organization of command and control of troops ... Komfrontz Kozlov does not know the position of the units at the front, their condition, as well as the enemy grouping. Not a single division has data on the number of people, the presence of artillery and mortars. Kozlov leaves the impression of a commander who is confused and unsure of his actions. None of the leading workers of the front has been in the army since the occupation of the Kerch Peninsula ...".

Having come to such a disappointing conclusion about the qualities of command, L.3. Mekhlis took over all the reins of government. The first result of his activities was the offensive of the troops of the front at the end of February with the aim of returning Feodosia. But despite the fact that only three German divisions opposed 13 Soviet divisions, the offensive failed. The reason for this, again, turned out to be bad organization.

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Acegego Stalin. Political Bio Pages

Counts L.3. Mekhlis. M.: "Belfry-MG", 1999. S. 203.

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From the memoirs of Konstantin Simonov, a correspondent for the Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper: "The offensive began ... very unsuccessfully. In February, a blizzard set in along with the rain, everything was incredibly unsettled, everything literally stood up, the tanks did not move, and the density of troops driven by Mekhlis, who led this offensive, replacing the de facto front commander of the weak-willed General Kozlov, was monstrous. Everything was pushed close to the front line, and every German shell, every mine, every bomb, exploding, inflicted enormous losses on us ... A kilometer, two, three, five, seven kilometers from the front line, everything was covered in corpses ... |

In a word, it was a picture of incompetent military leadership and complete, monstrous disorder. Plus, there is a complete disregard for people, a complete lack of concern for preserving manpower, for protecting people from unnecessary

, losses...!.

Subsequent attempts to break through the enemy defenses also ended in nothing, the troops of the Crimean Front were completely exhausted. In the fruitless offensives of January-April 1942, the troops suffered heavy losses, together with the losses in the Kerch-Feodosia operation, the total number of dead and wounded reached 152,274 soldiers and officers, irrevocably - 75,701 people ?. Now it took a long time and numerous reserves to restore their offensive capabilities. Local resources - manpower, food, fuel were completely exhausted. Everything had to be delivered by sea, but the enemy, having concentrated bomber aircraft on the Crimean airfields, actually blocked sea communications. The fleet, supplying the army, suffered heavy losses. Quite naturally, the question arose about the expediency of further holding the Crimean bridgeheads. The General Staff proposed to withdraw the troops back to the Taman Peninsula. But Stalin rejected these proposals and left the former task before the Crimean Front - the liberation of the peninsula from the enemy. Supreme Commander

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V.S. 208.

2 See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 277, 311.

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was already planning a new big offensive in the spring and summer of 1942.

"In March-April 1942, there was a brief lull on the Soviet-German front. The parties summed up the results and prepared for new battles. Results of the winter campaign

turned out to be very ambiguous for both sides. The Red Army, building on its initial success of the December counter-offensive near Moscow, continued its offensive along a front with a total length of 1,300 km and managed to advance 50-250 km by the beginning of April. The peak of its success came in January 1942, when the enemy, by his own admission, was on the verge of a "Napoleonic catastrophe." But the plan to defeat the German army during the winter offensive failed. The results of the offensive were very modest. Moreover, the price for this success was simply appalling. The total losses of the Red Army during the winter offensive amounted to 1 million 814 thousand people.

The losses of the Germans on the Eastern Front, despite the fact that the Wehrmacht was on the verge of complete disaster, were 2.5 times less - 723,200 people. In fact, the task set to "bleed the enemy and knock out his reserves" was solved, but not by the Red Army, but by the Wehrmacht. By the end of the winter campaign, the Soviet troops, bled dry and deprived of the necessary strategic reserves, were much weaker than they were at the beginning. It was to this conclusion that the high command of the Wehrmacht came. Hitler, during a meeting where plans for the spring campaign were discussed, stated: "Russian forces were exhausted in battles in winter and spring. Under these circumstances, it is necessary and possible to bring the war in the East to a decisive outcome this year.

In other words, the result of the Soviet "offensive along the entire front" turned out to be exactly the opposite of what was planned. Instead of creating the prerequisites for the complete defeat of Germany, the prerequisites for a new successful German offensive arose.

1 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 316.

. Stalingrad epic: Materials of the NKVD of the USSR and military censorship from the CA FSBRF. - M.: "Belfry-MG", 2000. S. 20-21

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which army. Indeed, the German command managed to save its army from catastrophe and retain all key positions, which made it possible to regain the lost strategic initiative in the upcoming spring-summer campaign.

At the same time, the grandiose winter offensive of the Red Army clearly revealed the colossal miscalculation made by the German military-political leadership in assessing the military potential of the Soviet Union. The Soviet state was able not only to make up for the colossal losses of the armed forces in the 1941 campaign, but also to create strategic reserves that made it possible to go on the offensive. The Soviet economy, even after losing dozens of factories in the European part of the country, managed not only to maintain, but also to increase the production of arms and ammunition. After the winter offensive

This miscalculation became obvious to the Red Army, and its consequences are no less obvious. Germany found itself in a situation of a protracted war on two fronts. The US entry into this war in December 1941 made this prospect hopeless.

There were many reasons for the failure of the Soviet winter offensive. The level of training of both privates and officers of the Red Army remained the same low - the newly created regiments and divisions simply did not have time to receive the necessary training and went to the front. The troops still lacked weapons and especially ammunition. But still, the main reasons were the inept use of what was. In general, throughout this period, the enemy did not have a significant superiority in equipment and weapons, but the German command always managed to achieve superiority in the right place and at the right time. The Soviet generals still did not master the fundamentals of conducting army and front operations, could not organize the interaction of infantry, tanks, artillery and aviation. But the main reasons for the winter failures nevertheless lay in a whole series of mistakes and miscalculations by the top management and, first of all, by I.V. Stalin. In fact, the Soviet military leaders have not yet learned how to fight.

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"TO GO FURTHER IS TO DESTROY YOURSELF"

In the spring of 1942, the opposing sides began preparing a new campaign. The German command no longer had enough forces to attack in all strategic directions, as it was in 1941. The losses in the winter campaign turned out to be too heavy, and the Wehrmacht was unable to make up for them. By April 1942, they amounted to 1,073,066 people (of which 276,550 were irretrievable), and 336,000 people were still not enough to fully compensate for losses in manpower; with the loss of 3,319 tanks, only 732 tanks were received, instead of the stolen 173 assault guns - only 17!. Very disturbing

symptom was the impossibility of full recovery

combat capability of formations of the Eastern Front - by the summer of 1942, out of a total of 226 formations, only 65 were able to fully restore their combat capability, the total understaffing of the formations reached 652 thousand soldiers and officers? I had to prioritize. At Hitler's insistence, the southern direction became a priority. It was planned to defeat the forces of the Southwestern and Southern fronts, to reach the Volga and the Caucasus. This was supposed to deprive the Soviet state of the most important sources of oil, a significant part of its economic potential and the ability to use the Volga as a transport communication linking the south and center of the country, ensuring the delivery of weapons from the allies through Iran and the Caspian Sea. In addition, the capture of the southern regions of the Soviet Union with their natural resources was of tremendous importance for Germany itself in the context of the protracted war that had begun. According to F. Paulus, who was present at the meeting where the plans for the spring campaign were discussed, Hitler declared: "My main

thought - to occupy the region of the Caucasus, perhaps more thoroughly defeating the forces of the Russians ... If I do not get the oil of Maykop and Grozny, I must stop the war ... "Preparation of the main strike

! See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 320, 517

2 See: Müller-Hillebrand B. Land Army of Germany 1933-1945. - M.: Izographus, Eksmo Publishing House, 2002. S. 385, 487.

b The Stalingrad epic: Materials of the NKVD of the USSR S. 20-21.

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in the south, it was accompanied by a large-scale operation to misinform the Soviet command, simulating the preparation of a powerful strike on Moscow. |

But, as in 1941, Soviet intelligence uncovered the content of the German plans for the upcoming campaign in time and with a high degree of certainty. Already in mid-March, the Main Intelligence Directorate reported to the General Staff of the Red Army that "the center of gravity of the spring offensive will be shifted to the southern sector of the front with an auxiliary strike in the north while simultaneously demonstrating on the Central Front against Moscow ... For the spring offensive, Germany, together with the allies will field up to 65 new divisions... The most probable date for the offensive is mid-April or early May.

However, as in 1941, the Soviet command had a different point of view. Supreme Commander I.V. Stalin, despite the failure of his plan to crush the enemy in 1942, was very optimistic. This optimism had certain grounds. The German blitzkrieg attempt failed. The Soviet country recovered from the shock of the beginning of the war, and the Red Army managed to inflict a serious defeat on the enemy in winter battles. It seemed that the war had come to a turning point. Moreover, the huge potential made it possible by the spring of 1942 to put under arms more than 400 divisions - about 11 million people, over 10 thousand tanks and more than 11 thousand aircraft. Germany's losses from the beginning of the invasion to March 1, 1942 were estimated at 5.8 million people, which should have brought the Wehrmacht to the brink of crisis. In other words; Stalin's January plan to wear down the enemy and deprive him of his reserves by the time the Red Army had large new reserves in the spring seemed to be fully embodied.

As a result, the Soviet command adopted a plan for the summer campaign, which provided for a strong and at the same time active defense on the front from Murmansk to Lake Ladoga. To ensure the "activity" of the defense, it was planned to carry out a number of "private" operations. It was necessary to liquidate

1 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 324.

? There. S. 325

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to destroy the enemy grouping that was still resisting in the encirclement near Demyansk, to defeat the Wehrmacht forces on the Rzhev-Vyazemsky bridgehead left over from the winter, to unblock Leningrad and liberate the Donbass.

When discussing this plan, a discussion broke out in the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. In fact, the only opponent of Stalin was G.K. Zhukov, who opposed the idea of numerous private offensives. Zhukov proposed to strike the main blow in the western direction.

From the memoirs of Marshal G.K. Zhukov:

"Basically, I agreed with the operational-strategic forecasts of the Supreme Commander, but I could not agree with him regarding the number of planned private offensive operations of our troops, believing that they would absorb our reserves without much benefit and this would complicate the preparation for the general offensive of the Soviet troops.

It is known that I.V. Stalin was a supporter of offensive actions on all fronts; this inevitably led to the dispersal of forces and means over small operations, which ultimately led to the exhaustion of the troops and their weakening.

Reporting my thoughts, I suggested I.V. Stalin, as well as the General Staff, as I have already mentioned, should first of all deliver powerful blows in the western strategic direction in order to defeat the enemy's Vyazma-Rzhev grouping. These strikes were to be carried out by the forces of the Western, Kalinin and nearby fronts, as well as Moscow's air defense aviation.

The defeat of the enemy in the western direction was supposed to seriously weaken his forces and force him to abandon large

offensive operations, at least for the near future.

Of course, now, with a retrospective assessment of events, this conclusion no longer seems so indisputable to me, but at that time, in the absence of complete data on the enemy, I was sure that I was right!

`Stalin's point of view was decisive, it was decided

Zhukov G.K. Decree op. pp. 276-277.

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the decision to strike in several directions, the south-western one was to be decisive. But even when discussing the plan for offensives in the southwestern direction, doubts arose, they were expressed by Marshal B.M. Shaposhnikov. In his opinion, the forces of the Red Army were still completely insufficient for such large-scale actions. But he was abruptly cut off by I.V. Stalin: "Don't sit on the defensive with folded hands and wait for the Germans to strike first! We must ourselves deliver a number of preemptive strikes on a broad front and probe the readiness of the enemy. Zhukov proposes to launch an offensive in the western direction, and defend on the remaining fronts. I think it's a half-measure."

Stalin's decision this time also turned out to be decisive and final. The generals present at the meeting only "nodding approvingly"! The Red Army began preparations for a series of offensives within the framework of "active defense".

It is quite remarkable that even Zhukov, who alone dared to object to Stalin, did not oppose the very idea of "active defense"—that is, combining defense and offensive, but only suggested a different direction of the main efforts. This meant that even in the spring of 1942, almost a year after the start of the war, neither Stalin nor the Soviet generals had yet mastered the entire body of knowledge necessary for waging a modern war. They still did not realize that mere numerical superiority over the enemy was not enough, that the main weakness of the Red Army lay in organization and management, and that in these components of military power it lagged far behind the enemy. Meanwhile, the combination of both defense and offensive, being a very complex type of action, required the highest level of organization and management. Any combination of oppositely directed actions is extremely difficult to implement. Especially since the Red Army was confronted by an enemy who had proven his ability to quickly transition from a large-scale offensive to a solid, stable defense and back.

The adoption of the decision on "active defense" doomed the Red Army units to the old tactics of "exhausting" the baking sheet.

1 Zhukov G.K. S.278.

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ka, which has already led to monstrous losses during the Moscow battle. In addition to losses, this tactic gave another invariable result - the formations of the Red Army were not able to either break through the enemy's defenses or create their own. "Active" defense assumed a series of offensive operations with limited objectives to improve the position of the defending units. But due to the acute shortage of aviation, artillery, and tanks, one had to rely on the same infantry with their rifles and machine guns. However, with only small arms, it was practically impossible to break through the prepared German defenses, abundantly saturated with automatic weapons, artillery, mortars and constantly supported by ground attack aircraft.

ski is impossible. The infantry was bleeding, wasting its reserves and simply did not have time to create a defense in depth with an established system of fire and interaction between the combat arms. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that about two-thirds of the reinforcements received by the army remained practically untrained. As a rule, new formations and units were not yet organized, had a significant shortage in personnel and lacked ammunition and weapons. But neither this nor other circumstances were taken into account. Moreover, in the process of developing the guiding documents for the new campaign, Stalin's desire to achieve decisive results again prevailed. Practically all fronts, with the exception of the northern sector, on the basis of Stalin's demand, were given the tasks of decisive offensives with the aim of expelling the invaders from the occupied territory by the end of 1942. blow, perhaps even abandoning some tasks, having destroyed the main fresh reserves of the enemy, go on a decisive offensive on the entire front!

Tragedy in Myasny Bor. Inspired by the new Stalinist plan for the complete liberation of Soviet territory in the coming 1942, the command of the Leningrad Front

1 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 327.

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developed a plan for an offensive operation on the Volkhov direction with the decisive goal of lifting the blockade of Leningrad. A feature of the hostilities in this area in the spring of 1942 was a kind of "mirror" of the situation. On the one hand, Soviet troops continued to block the enemy grouping near Demyansk, only a narrow corridor and an "air bridge" made it possible to ensure the supply of troops. On the other hand, the 2nd shock army of Lieutenant General A.A. found itself in a practically similar situation. Vlasov, blocked in the forests and swamps near the village of Myasnoy Bor. With enormous labors and heavy losses, it was possible to break through a narrow corridor in the encirclement, but the command could not establish a normal supply. The army remained on a "starvation ration" in every sense of the word. But the front commander, instead of withdrawing the army from the encirclement, sets before it and other troops of the front the task of further offensive and defeat of the enemy troops. The Stavka approves this, to put it mildly, "ambitious" plan without objection. On May 21, 1942, Stalin signed a directive on the start of the offensive.

However, the German command by that time had already managed to take all the necessary measures. The deployment of the Soviet troops left no doubt about their upcoming actions, and before the reconnaissance they only confirmed the preparations for a new offensive. 10 divisions were concentrated on the flanks of the 2nd Army, and at the end of June the army of General Vlasov was completely

surrounded. Now the opponents have changed places. The Soviet command, finally realizing the threat that had arisen, threw all its forces into saving the 2nd shock. For this, a whole front was formed under the command of General K.A. Meretskov. But it was already too late. Army of General A.A. Vlasov was completely destroyed, according to German data, about 33 thousand prisoners of war, 600 guns and 170 tanks were captured. The commander of the army was also taken prisoner.

During this unfortunate operation, the troops of the Volkhov Front lost 94,751 people, 54,774 of them irretrievably. To this day, in the impassable swamps near Myasny Bor, there are

1 See: Great Patriotic... S. 330

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unburied remains of thousands and thousands of Soviet soldiers and officers of the 2nd shock army, and those who remained "missing about the fallen."

A "mirror" answer near Demyansk also did not work. Although the Northwestern Front had a significant superiority in forces, but. failed to use it. Forces and means were again scattered, and, as a result, there was no longer superiority in the decisive areas. In early May, the enemy easily repulsed numerous but poorly organized attacks by Soviet units. In the course of these fruitless attempts to destroy the blockaded enemy grouping, the troops of the North-Western Front in January-May 1942 suffered colossal losses - 245,511 soldiers and officers, of which 88,908 were irretrievable! The struggle for the Demyansk Cauldron continued on this sector of the front for another whole year. In general, the actions of the North-Western and Volkhov fronts of the Red Army, despite the heaviest losses, did not achieve results. The enemy was not defeated, Leningrad remained in blockade.

Disaster in the Crimea. On April 21, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command assigned the troops of the Crimean Front the task of liberating the peninsula. In the future, the defeat of the 11th Army of E. Manstein, which besieged Sevastopol, made it possible not only to lift the blockade from the city, but also, breaking through the Perekop Isthmus from the south, to create a threat to the deep rear of the entire German Army Group South. In turn, this could create the prerequisites for the liberation of the entire south of the country. Therefore, Stalin attached great importance to the actions of the Soviet troops in the Crimea. Front commander General D.T. Kozlov had an impressive force at his disposal—nearly 260,000 soldiers and officers, 347 tanks, 3,577 guns and mortars, and about 400 aircraft. The forces of the Crimean Front outnumbered the enemy in personnel by 2 times, in tanks - 1.2 times, artillery - 1.8 times. The Germans retained the advantage of only aviation - 1.7 times. But here it should be noted that Manstein was forced to divide his forces between Sevastopol and the Kerch Peninsula.

1 See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 311.

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The grouping and deployment of the forces of the Crimean Front were clearly offensive in nature, its main forces - the 47th and 51st armies - were located on the right wing, which went deep into the German defenses, and on the left wing the defense was occupied by the weakest of all 44 I am an army.

The same L.Z3 remained the representative of the Headquarters at the front. Mehlis. By that time, he had finally subjugated General D.T. Kozlov and actually controlled the troops of the front. Determined to defeat the enemy at any cost in the next offensive, Mekhlis subordinated everything to this idea and began to fight against the "defensive psychology of some generals". As a result, preparations for the offensive proceeded through the creation of the minimum necessary defense, provided for by all charters and instructions. There was practically no reconnaissance. Mehlis managed to insist that the enemy was no longer able to attack. The troops were advanced to the front line and practically stretched out in one line. There were no front and army reserves, primarily artillery and anti-tank ones. Neither camouflage nor air defense of the troops and headquarters was provided. Defensive lines in the rear of the troops - on the Turkish Wall and around Kerch - did not begin to be built. Sadly, all the experience of past battles, including personal ones, did not teach Lev Zakharovich Mekh anything

fox.

Meanwhile, the commander of the 11th Army, General E. Manshtein, did not wait for the Soviet offensive. With only 6 divisions, the German commander decided to attack himself. Early on the morning of May 8, a powerful German fire attack fell upon the stunned units of the 44th Army. Aircraft and heavy artillery struck targets previously reconnoitred - headquarters, communication centers, artillery positions. In the very first hours, the command and control system was paralyzed. The parts were left to themselves. The enemy, as before, concentrated his main forces on a narrow sector of the front - three German divisions were advancing on the position of the 63rd Mountain Division of the 44th Army. By the end of the day, they broke through the front and went out into the depths.

1 See Rubtsov Yu.V. Acegero Stalin... S. 217

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bin of the Soviet defense for 10 km. To disorganize the Soviet defense in the rear, a battle was landed from assault boats.
he is an infantry.

The violation of control led to the fact that the commander of the 44th Army, Major General S.I. Chernyak failed to organize

a counterattack by the tank brigades at his disposal, and the enemy moved inland without hindrance, enveloping the troops of the 47th and 57th armies from the south. The formations of these armies, not being attacked by the enemy, remained in their positions. The command of the Crimean Front at first did not realize the whole threat of a breakthrough in the sector of the 44th Army. Manstein, on the other hand, introduced the forces of the 22nd Panzer Division into the breakthrough, and already on May 9 it reached the Turkish Wall, cutting off the withdrawal of Soviet troops to the east. The front command, having finally lost control of the troops, was completely at a loss. |

From the memoirs of Admiral I.S. Isakov:

"I saw Mekhlis when we were ordered to evacuate what could still be evacuated from the Kerch Peninsula. He pretended to seek death. His forehead was either broken or slightly wounded, but there was no bandage, there was a bloody scratch with bruises; he was unshaven for several days. His hands and feet were covered in mud, he apparently helped the driver to pull out the car and after that did not consider it necessary to put himself in order. The sight was desperate. He also had a car that had a completely desperate look, and he drove alone with a driver, without any guards. Despite the tragedy of the situation, there was something in this 'ostentatious - a man shows that he is looking for death'".

Nothing could have prevented the catastrophe. The troops randomly retreated to Kerch, crowds of unarmed and demoralized soldiers seized ships in the port and crossed to the other side of the strait. Stalin's order to turn Kerch into a "second Sevastopol" remained unfulfilled. Eight Soviet divisions were surrounded, and several thousand more

! Cit. Quoted from: Simonov K. Through the Eyes of a Man of My Generation. Reflections on I.V. Stalin. - M.: Pravda Publishing House, 1990. S. 351.

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people took refuge in the Adzhimushkay quarries, where for almost half a year they continued the heroic struggle with the enemy units blocking them.

In fact, the picture of the defeat repeated 1941. One of the eyewitnesses described what was happening as follows: "I was on the Kerch Peninsula in 1942. The reason for the shameful defeat is clear to me. Complete distrust of the commanders of the armies and the front, tyranny and wild arbitrariness of Mekhlis, an illiterate man in military affairs ... He forbade digging trenches so as not to undermine the offensive spirit of the soldiers. He advanced heavy artillery and army headquarters to the very front line, and so on. Three armies stood on a front of 16 kilometers, a division occupied 600-700 meters along the front, nowhere else have I ever seen such saturation with troops. And all this was mixed into a bloody mess, was thrown into the sea, perished only because the front was commanded not by a commander, but by a madman ... ".!

In just less than two weeks, the Crimean Front ceased to exist, its losses, according to Soviet data, amounted to 176,566 people, including irretrievable losses - 162,282 (65% of the total number of front troops), 347 tanks, 3,476 guns and mortars, about 400 aircraft. According to the enemy, only about 170 thousand prisoners were captured, the Germans estimated their own losses at 7,588 people killed.

Stalin took the defeat in the Crimea extremely painfully. Having found out the extent of the catastrophe, he ordered the preparation of a special directive to the fronts, where the specific causes of the Crimean catastrophe were determined. The commanders of the armies, and especially the command of the front, did not observe the basics of military science, moreover, they inexplicably thoughtlessly violated the foundations of the existing regulations of the Red Army, which required, regardless of the plans for further actions, to prepare the necessary defense, establish communications and control, intelligence and combat security, and interaction between military branches. and adjacent connections. Any commander, and even more so the commander of an army or

| Cit. Quoted from: Simonov K.S. 297 ?

See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 31 1; The Great Patriotic War

war. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 332.

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front had to do this automatically, without waiting for any orders from above. But here's the answer to the main question - why this was not done - Stalin's directive did not give. It did not, because it was in the Crimea that the congenital disease of the Stalinist system of command of troops manifested itself most vividly and monstrously. This manifestation could be called "Mehlis syndrome".

This was unexpectedly accurately expressed by Stalin himself in a conversation with General Kozlov, who was removed from his post:

From the memoirs of Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky: |

"Kozlov entered, and although it was very soon after the Kerch catastrophe, all this was still very fresh in his memory, Stalin met him quite calmly, did not show either anger or hostility. He shook hands and said:

- I'm hearing you. You asked me to accept you. What questions do you have for me? |

Kozlov, who himself asked to be seen by Stalin, after the order was issued to remove him from the post of commander of the Crimean Front and reduce him in rank, began to say that he believed that this was unfair to him, that he did everything he could to master the situation,

put in all his strength. He said, all this in a very excited, hysterical tone.

Stalin calmly listened to him without interrupting. I listened for a long time. Then he asked:

— Is everything gone?

- Yes.

“You see, you wanted to do everything you could, but you couldn't do what you were supposed to do. |

In response to these words, spoken very calmly, Kozlov began to talk about Mehlis, that Mehlis did not allow him to do what he considered necessary, interfered, put pressure on him, and he did not have the opportunity to command because of Mehlis as he considered necessary. walking.

Stalin calmly stopped him and asked:

“Wait, Comrade Kozlov! Tell me, who was your commander of the front, you or Mekhlis?

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- I.

“So you were in command of the front?”

- Yes.

- Were your orders obligated to be carried out by everyone at the front? |

- Yes, but...

- You, as commander, were responsible for the course of the operation? ..

- I, but he did not give me command.

Why didn't you call and tell?

I wanted to call, but I didn't have the opportunity.

- Why?

“Mekhlis was in doubt all the time, and I could not call without him. I would have to call in his presence.

- Fine. Why couldn't you call in his presence?

Silent.

- Why, if you thought that you were right, and not him, why couldn't you call in his presence? Obviously, you

risch Kozlov, were you afraid of Mehlis more than the Germans?

"You don't know Mekhlis, Comrade Stalin," exclaimed Kozlov. |

"Well, let's say that's not true, Comrade Kozlov. I know Comrade Mekhlis. And now I want to ask you: why are you complaining? You commanded the front, you were responsible for the actions of the front, you are asked for this, you are displaced for this. I think that everything has been done right with you, Comrade Kozlov.

Then, when Kozlov left, he turned to Rokossovsky and, saying goodbye to him, said:

"That's an interesting conversation, comrade Rokossovsky."

Rokossovsky further recalled: "I left the office of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief with the thought that I, a man who had recently accepted the front, had been given a subject lesson. Believe me, I tried to learn it. The way Stalin dealt with the delinquent commander of the front gives reason to assume that for him the main thing was, after all, not the sheer size of the disasters.

1 Simonov K. Through the eyes of a man of my generation... S. 341-342. ? Rokossovsky K. K. Op. S. 164.

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s and its consequences. Thus, the defeat of the border armies of the Western Front in the first week of the war is quite comparable in scale to the catastrophe in the Crimea, and even inferior in the number of losses, but neither Kozlov nor the others were even brought to justice, but were limited to rather symbolic punishments. Stalin showed exactly the same condescension towards General F.I. and terrifying unprofessionalism, and Kozlov, and Kuznetsov still did not make the main mistake - they did not give Stalin a reason to doubt their absolute loyalty and controllability. In other words, in Stalin's eyes, Kozlov remained, though far from being the most capable commander, but a completely reliable executor of his will, and this was the main thing. Stalin's remark that Kozlov "feared Mekhlis more than the Germans" sounds here almost like a compliment to himself.

For obvious reasons, the role of the Stavka and Stalin himself in this catastrophe was not appreciated. But it was precisely the instructions from Moscow that played a decisive role in the fact that the troops of all three armies of the front, until the very last day, were preparing not so much for defense as for the offensive. Neither the Headquarters nor the General Staff were able to uncover the preparations for the German offensive in the Crimea in time, and the instructions to the troops of the Crimean Front to go on the defensive came the day before the German strike, just as happened with the troops of the Western Front in front of the Vyazma Ka-

tastrofa in October 1941

The defeat of the Crimean Front predetermined the fall of Sevastopol: now Manstein could throw all his forces into the assault on the fortress - 204 thousand people, over 2,000 guns and mortars,

1' After the removal from office, D.T. Kozlov was demoted to major general and after a break was appointed commander of the 24th Army of the Hundred Lingrad Front, but was soon removed and sent to the post of deputy commander of the Voronezh Front, and then - deputy commander of the Trans-Baikal Front. In 1943 he again received the rank of lieutenant general. (See: Great

honest. Commanders. Military biographical dictionary. — M.; Zhu Kovsky: Kuchkovo Pole, 2005. See: pp. 95-96.)

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450 tanks and about 600 aircraft. The actions of the 11th Army were supported by the most powerful artillery grouping in the entire war, including 56 batteries of heavy and super-heavy guns with a caliber of 210 to 800 mm, firing projectiles weighing from 1,000 to 7,000 kg. The defense of Sevastopol was led by the commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Vice Admiral F.S. Oktyabrsky, the ground forces were commanded by Major General I.E. Petrov. The defending forces numbered 106,000 men, about 600 guns and mortars, 38 tanks and 53 aircraft! By the beginning of summer: 1942, the fighting near Sevastopol reached its highest degree - fierceness on both sides. The garrison of the fortress held back the attacks of the enemy and itself turned into constant counterattacks.

From the memoirs of a Wehrmacht officer G. Biderman, a participant in the assault on Sevastopol:

"We opened point-blank at the attackers with high-explosive shells. The roar of battle drowned out the cries of Soviet soldiers; the feverish reloading of the guns masked the horror that seized our ranks. Nearby, a heavy machine gun was churning one after another of shiny cartridges through the feed tray, ejecting shells from a hot receiver in an endless stream. At 50 meters in front of our trenches, mines began to explode on stony soil - it was the mortar crews standing behind us who tried to weaken the waves of attackers that fell on us. The advance slowed down in front of our trenches. The open space in front of us was dotted with black silhouettes of the dead and dying. Through the ringing in the ears from the close fire from hundreds of barrels, only the screams of the wounded could be heard. The pre-dawn air remained heavy and almost suffocating with bitter gunpowder smoke; and through the smoke and dust one could hardly see the outlines of the wounded enemy soldiers fighting in agony in front of our positions ... I heard the machine gunner cry: "I just can't kill all the time!" He pressed the trigger relentlessly, sending streams of bullets from the smoking barrel of the MO into the masses of the attackers. Our shells created gaps in the ranks. This attack stopped some 50 meters from the barrel of our gun ...

! See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 333.

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By noon, we struggled to retain consciousness, moving in dense powder smoke. There was a ringing in our ears, we were physically exhausted by the tension and horror of the battle, we could hardly move our legs, trying to clear our firing position. The machine-gunners could no longer straighten the fingers of their right hands; mortar crews hardly raised their hands from exhaustion ... "!

The stability of the defense directly depended on the supply of the fortress garrison with weapons, ammunition, equipment and food, and, most importantly, replenishment. The enemy understood this too. First of all, German aviation won air supremacy. Then, in order to block the fortress from the sea, a special air group consisting of 150 bombers and torpedo bombers was concentrated at the Crimean airfields, and a group of torpedo boats was based in the nearest ports. These forces were thrown against the ships of the Black Sea Fleet, which supplied the fortress with everything necessary. The hunt for each individual ship began. Already in June, only submarines or high-speed destroyers and small ships could break into Sevastopol. But they were unable to provide the garrison of the fortress with everything necessary. In fact, from that moment on, the fate of Sevastopol was a foregone conclusion, the period of its fall could be calculated mathematically.

Using colossal superiority in aviation and artillery, the enemy methodically crushed the defenses of the fortress. On June 7, the third assault on Sevastopol began. The number of attacks reached 15-20 per day. The fortress simply bled, but the radiated replenishment did not make up for the losses, the stocks of owl ammunition were running low. Due to the lack of shells, the infantry was left without the support of field and anti-aircraft artillery, the coastal batteries fell silent, the effective fire of their heavy guns held back the rampart for a long time. enemy. The surviving Soviet fighters left the Fortress and flew to the Caucasian airfields. In the last days of June, German units broke through to the North Bay,

full-scale and organized evacuation became impossible

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Biederman G. In mortal combat. Memoirs of the commander of the anti-tank calculation. 1941-1945 / Transl. English A.S. Tsyplenkova. - M.: ZAO Tsentrpo LiGraf, 2005. S. 62-63.

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possible. Command of the Sevastopol Defensive

district, headed by Vice Admiral F.S. Oktyabrsky failed to determine the moment after which the defense of the fortress lost its meaning, and the evacuation of the garrison became necessary. Moreover, the transfer to the Caucasus of several tens of thousands of experienced, battle-hardened soldiers, sailors and officers was to play a big role in repelling the now inevitable enemy offensive on the Taman Peninsula. Only on June 29, Admiral F.S. Oktyabrsky requested permission to evacuate 200-250 senior officials, headed by the command. Stalin gave such permission, and on the night of 11 July Sevastopol left over 600 officers, incl. Admiral F.S. himself Oktyabrsky and General I.E. Petrov. Major General P.G. was placed at the head of the remaining troops. But Vikov with the task of "fighting to the last opportunity, and then making his way into the mountains to the partisans." No attempts were made by the command of the fleet to organize an evacuation, although not all possibilities had yet been exhausted.

The last days of the defenders of Sevastopol turned out to be deeply tragic. They had no chance of salvation, but tens of thousands of soldiers and sailors still expected to be evacuated until the last day and until their last hour. Thousands of people, most of them wounded, gathered on a narrow strip of shore, covered with clouds of smoke from fires and explosions of bombs and shells. Severely suffering from heat and thirst, they continued to repulse enemy attacks, saving their last rounds of ammunition and grenades, in the vain hope that ships were about to come for them. Hundreds tried to go to sea on boats, rafts, car cameras, or even just by swimming, but at sea they were intercepted by enemy boats or shot from the air by fighters. Organized fighting continued until July 7, the last pockets of defense were suppressed on July 10. According to the enemy, about 95 thousand people were captured in total, over 45 thousand people died in the last days of the defense. In total, during the siege of Sevastopol from October 1941 to July 1942, the losses of Soviet troops exceeded 200 thousand people, 156 thousand of them were unaccompanied.

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gate '. The losses of the German 11th Army near Sevastopol during the summer assault amounted to about 24,000 killed and wounded.

The heroic defense of Sevastopol - one of the most glorious pages of Russian history - ended in a terrible tragedy and the inglorious flight of generals and admirals, who left their soldiers and sailors to their fate.

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Breakout in the south. In May 1942, large-scale battles flared up on the sector of the Southwestern and Southern fronts. The configuration of the front line here was determined by the same "Barvenkov-

"sky" ledge, which created a direct threat to the flank and deep rear of the main German group in the Donbass. The command of the Southwestern Front (commander - Marshal S.K. Timoshenko, member of the Military Council of the front - N.S. Khrushchev) proposed to the Headquarters a plan to strike from this ledge in order to liberate Kharkov, and later - the entire Donbass. The second strike was supposed to be delivered from the Volchansk area, which made it possible to encircle the opposing enemy grouping. In a word, "active defense" with decisive goals was also planned here. This plan was discussed at Headquarters in March 1942 in an atmosphere of euphoria that still reigned and after I.V. Stalin about "the impossibility of sitting idly by" was approved. The Southwestern Front received significant replenishment.

The Barvenkovsky ledge also did not give rest to the German command, an operation was prepared to "cut it off". It was supposed to encircle and destroy the Soviet troops in this ledge, and then launch an offensive to the Volga and the Caucasus. The German command could plan its actions with complete confidence, since it had at its disposal the entire plan of the Soviet offensive, captured from the commander of the 48th Army of the Bryansk Front, General A.G. Samokhin, who, returning from Moscow after a meeting with Stalin, was captured along with secret materials. The pilot of his plane, having lost his orientation, landed the plane directly on the German airfield in Mtsensk?.

1 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 335.2

There. S. 336.

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As in the Crimea, the opponents were simultaneously preparing for offensive actions, which predetermined the emergence of a meeting battle situation. As noted above, this very form of organizing and conducting a battle requires high command efficiency, stable communications, the initiative of unit and formation commanders, and the accuracy and speed of reconnaissance. But for some time, the Soviet command did not have time to master these command and control skills, while the enemy, on the contrary, was at the peak of his form, and it was almost impossible to beat him in an oncoming battle. In this regard, it is extremely symptomatic that during the period of planning an attack on Kharkov, the Soviet command received intelligence about a possible enemy offensive with the aim of eliminating the Barvenkovo ledge itself. However, neither the Stavka nor the command of the Southwestern Front were afraid of the prospect of receiving a counterattack from the Germans. Against the background of the rout of the Crimean Front that broke out on the same days, which was preparing for an offensive in the same way and received a catastrophic blow from Manstein in the flank, this looks overconfident. But, apparently, the Soviet command did not realize this in bulk. Moreover, Stalin drew an unexpected conclusion from the catastrophe that broke out in the Crimea.

From the memoirs of Marshal G.K. Zhukov:

"... during a telephone conversation with me about the Crimean front and the southwestern direction, the Supreme Commander said:

"You see what the defense leads to? (He hinted at my speech at the March meeting.) ... We must severely punish Kozlov, Mekhlis and Kulik for their carelessness, so that others would be repulsed by mouthing. Timoshenko will soon begin an attack on Kharkov. Haven't you changed your mind about the course of action in the south?

I answered no. I think that in the south it is necessary to meet the enemy with air strikes and powerful fire, defeat him with a stubborn defense, and then go on the offensive.

According to one of the participants, at the headquarters of the South-West

1 Zhukov G.K. Decree. op. S. 280.

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On the new front, "a spirit of optimism reigned... The military council of the front no longer considered the enemy dangerous." Immediately before the start of the offensive, the front commander, Marshal S.K. Timoshenko, speaking at a meeting of commanders, assured them of the weakness of the enemy, of the complete superiority of his armies. "The mere fact that Comrade Stalin is ours! great friend teacher, approved the offensive plans of the front, - said the commander, - can serve as a sure guarantee of the upcoming success of our offensive.

In this situation, the Soviet offensive began, it was six days ahead of the German one. On May 12, the troops of the South-Western Front delivered two converging blows - one from the Bar Venkovsky ledge, bypassing Kharkov from the south, the other from the Volchansk region. At first, the offensive developed successfully. 6th Army Lieutenant General A.M. Gorodnyansky and the army group of Major General L.V. Bobkin, breaking through the enemy defenses, advanced almost 50 km in five days, covering the 6th army of General F. Paulus from the flank. At the same time, from the north in the direction of Kharkov, the divisions of the 28th Army, Lieutenant General D.I. Ryabyshev, they also managed to penetrate the enemy defenses to a depth of 25 km?. The first results of the offensive strengthened both the Headquarters and the front command in the enemy's initial forecast and assessments. Stalin did not even fail to reproach A.M. Vasilevsky that, at his insistence, he almost canceled such a successfully developing operation. However, in reality there were very few grounds for optimism - they managed to advance only on the southern face of the Barvenkovo ledge, and soon this offensive fizzled out. The enemy was once again ahead of the Soviet troops in a maneuver. F. Paulus received reserves and covered his

wing. Moreover, having assessed the new situation, the German command decides to use it to their advantage. Considering that the advancing Soviet armies were actually putting their flank and rear under attack, a decision was made

1 Cited. by: Beshanov V.V. Decree. op. P. 220. `2 See
Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1990. P. 216.

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one hundred covering a attacks from the north and south to inflict powerful blow to the Barvenkovo ledge only from the south with the aim of encircling the entire Soviet strike force.

Already on the morning of May 17, the troops of Field Marshal E. Kleist delivered unexpected blows south of Barvenkovo against the formations of the 9th Army and, breaking through the weak defenses on the move, rushed to the flanks of the rear of the entire grouping of the Southwestern Front. As before, the Germans applied the worked out scheme. Having concentrated the overwhelming mass of troops and equipment on the breakthrough site, they launched massive air and artillery strikes, destroying the command posts of units and formations, disrupting communications, destroying communications. In the very first hours, the Soviet troops practically lost control and began a disorderly retreat under the blows of superior enemy forces. German tanks, meeting no resistance, rushed to the rear, destroying everything in their path. Marshal Timoshenko had significant forces at his disposal to repel the blow - the 57th Army of Lieutenant General K.P. Podlas and the 9th Army of Major General F.M. Kharitonov. But the actions of the E. Kleist group came as a complete surprise to the front command. Now the Soviet command had to show its ability to act in a critical situation, quickly parrying enemy counterattacks. Reserves were thrown against the enemy that had broken through - two rifle divisions, a cavalry corps and a tank brigade. The forces were strong enough to stop or slow down the movement of the German strike group, but again communication failed, and the reserves were left to themselves. They failed to complete their assigned task. From the outside, all this looked like a chaotic movement of troops across the vast steppe, through which German tank columns were rapidly advancing, surrounding the main forces of the Southwestern Front. At the same time, the formations of the 6th and 57th armies, which were at the forefront of the ongoing offensive, made their way to Kharkov, ever deeper "climbing into the bag prepared for them." Another great catastrophe was looming. What were the actions of the Soviet command at that moment? 5

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From the memoirs of Marshal G.K. Zhukov:

"I happened to be present that day at Headquarters at one

nom from subsequent conversations I.V. Stalin with the commander of the Southwestern Front. I remember well that the Supreme Commander offered S.K. Timoshenko to stop the offensive and turn the main forces of the Barvenkovo group against the enemy's Kramatorsk grouping.

S.K. Timoshenko reported that the Military Council considers the danger of the Kramatorsk group clearly exaggerated, therefore, there is no reason to stop the offensive operation. -

By the evening of May 18, a conversation took place on the same issue with a member of the Military Council of the front, N.S. Khrushchev, who you said the same reasons as the command of the South-Western Front: the danger from the Kramatorsk enemy group is greatly exaggerated, there is no reason to stop the operation. Referring to these reports of the Military Council of the Southwestern Front on the need to continue the offensive, the Supreme Commander rejected the considerations of the General Staff. The existing version about alarm signals allegedly coming from the Military Councils of the Southern and Southwestern Fronts to the Headquarters does not correspond to reality. I testify to this because I was personally present at the negotiations of the Supreme.

The commander of the South-Western direction, Marshal Tim Moshenko, took a number of actions to repel Clay's strike only on May 19. The armies that advanced 60 km to Kharkov were ordered to go on the defensive and repel the enemy's offensive with joint efforts. The front command planned a powerful concentric strike against the Kleist grouping by the forces of three armies - the 6th, 57th, and 9th. But on May 21, E. Kleist, ahead of the Soviet marshal in a maneuver, changed the direction of the blow and again broke through the defenses. At the same time, the army of F. Paulus struck from the north, towards Kleist's divisions. This time, the Soviet command simply did not have time to take countermeasures. On May 23, the troops of the Southwestern Front were surrounded in the Barvenkovsky ledge. A very powerful grouping, numbering almost 300 thousand people, got into the environment. Marshal Timoshenko subjugated all the surrounded war-

' Zhukov G.K. Decree. op. S. 282.

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ska to his deputy lieutenant general F.Ya. Kostenko, having set the task of breaking through the encirclement by joint actions with the 38th Army, which delivered a deblocking blow towards them.

At the head of the Soviet formations were experienced commanders who fought for the second year, many had already been surrounded and had experience in organizing a breakthrough from various "cauldrons". It seemed that this time there were every opportunity to organize resistance of the encircled troops and ensure their exit from the encirclement. But the grouping surrounded near Barvenkovo was cut into pieces and completely disorganized the very next day. Local battles in the encirclement continued until May 29.

Only about 27 thousand people were able to get out of the encirclement.

The losses were very heavy. According to Soviet data, the Southwestern and Southern Fronts lost 277,190 people, of which 170,958 were irretrievably lost! In battles, well-known military leaders, generals F.Ya., died or committed suicide. Kostenko, K.P. Podlas, A.F. Anisov, A.M. Gorodnyansky, A.I. Vlasov, L.V. Bobkin, 3.Yu. Kutlin and others. 652 tanks, 1,646 guns, 3,278 mortars were lost?

The catastrophe near Kharkov was the result of numerous mistakes made by the command of the South-Western direction. Both the commander and his headquarters made a fatal underestimation of the enemy and overestimation of their own capabilities, poorly organized intelligence, did not provide stable communications and, most importantly, completely ineffectively managed troops. In essence, this was a repetition of the mistakes of the summer of 1941. Just like the commander of the Western Front, General of the Army D.G. Pavlov, Marshal S.K. Timoshenko, after the threat of catastrophe arose, preferred to leave the command post and go to the troops. Although it was at this moment that it was necessary at all costs to maintain the centralization of control and stable command of the units entrusted to him. This decision of the marshal testified to a complete misunderstanding of the importance of maintaining firm command and control of troops in a critical

1 See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 311.

2 See: Beshanov V.V. Decree. op. S. 234.

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situations. Stereotypes were still in effect during the Civil War, when the proximity of a commander to the front line could have a great moral impact on the troops. However, this style of command was inherent in many Soviet generals.

However, this time Stalin did not bring the offending marshal to justice. He only hinted at such a possibility. The chief of staff, Lieutenant General I.Kh., was blamed for everything. Bagramyan. Marshal Timoshenko got a chance to rectify the situation. In June, the 6th German Army of General F. Paulus, using the success near Kharkov, continued the successful offensive. With counterattacks by three tank corps, Timoshenko managed to stop the enemy, but not for long. The enemy delivered his main blow to the north.

Breakthrough to the Don. On June 28, the summer offensive of the German army began on the southern sector of the Eastern Front. The plan provided for the destruction of the main forces of the Southwestern Front by deep envelopment and encirclement to the west of Voronezh. The main role this time was assigned to the "armored wedges" of the Wehrmacht - tank armies. The 4th army of General G. Goth was supposed to strike north of Kursk with a subsequent exit to Voronezh, the 1st tank army of General 9. Kleist had to break through the defenses south of Kursk and exit

ti to connect with the 4th army, closing the encirclement. In total, significant forces were involved in the implementation of this plan - up to 900 thousand soldiers and officers, 1,260 tanks, over 17 thousand guns and mortars, 1,640 aircraft.

Despite the heavy losses suffered in May near Kharkov, the combined forces of the Bryansk, Southwestern and Southern fronts retained a significant superiority over the enemy in manpower and tanks, yielding only in aviation and artillery. They included 1,715,000 men, 2,300 tanks, 15,600 guns and mortars, and 758 combat aircraft. Of particular importance was the almost twofold superiority in tanks. The flat nature of the terrain was extremely conducive to the effective use of tank formations to solve large-scale operational tasks.

The success of the German offensive was in jeopardy and

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one reason. On June 19, the plane, which was followed by an officer of the headquarters of the 23rd Panzer Division, went off course and was shot down over the positions of the Soviet troops. The orders and maps of the German operation were at the disposal of the command of the Red Army. However, Stalin did not attach much importance to them. The calmness of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief was explained by the presence of powerful reserves in this sector of the front, primarily tank reserves. As a result, no appropriate action was taken. In many ways, this predetermined the success of the German offensive that began on July 28. Already on the first day, the enemy, having delivered a butt blow to the 13th and 40th armies of the Bryansk Front, achieved success and advanced 8-12 km, disrupting the control of these formations. To remedy the situation, the Stavka sent its tank reserves. At the disposal of the front commander, Lieutenant General F.I. Golikov turned out to be five tank corps. These were forces capable of not only stopping the advance of the enemy's 4th Panzer Army, but also defeating them. Everything now depended on the ability of the front command to use its superiority. About this to General F.I. Stalin personally reminded Golikov: "You now ... have more than 1,000 tanks, while the enemy does not even have 500 ... more than 500 tanks have gathered on the front of action of the enemy's three tank divisions, and the enemy has 300-350 tanks at most more. It all depends on your ability to use these forces and control them ... "2.

But neither the numerical superiority, nor the personal reminder of the Supreme did not help. It didn't help that the "chief tanker" of the Red Army, the head of the Main Automotive Armored Directorate, Lieutenant General Ya.N., arrived on the Bryansk Front to assist in organizing a counterattack. Fedorenko co. Paradoxical as it may seem, the mistakes of the border battles of 1941 were repeated, when the mechanized corps of the Southwestern Front were thrown towards the enemy. And this time, the front command was unable to organize a simultaneous strike - as usual, communication and control failed. There was no orga-

1 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 340.? There. S. 341.

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neither reconnaissance nor interaction with artillery and aviation has been reduced.

As a result, the corps, as in 1941, were introduced into battle in parts, weakly interacting with each other. The command of the front failed to direct the blow of its "tank fist" to the flank of the divisions of Hoth, and it fell directly on the "forehead" of the advancing German grouping. The enemy did not get involved in a protracted battle and went around parts of the 4th and 17th Soviet corps, surrounding them. The counterattack failed, and the enemy continued to advance on Voronezh. On June 30, the shock forces of the 6th army of General F. Paulus went on the offensive. They quickly broke through

, whether the defense at the junction of the Bryansk and Southwestern fronts to a depth of 80 km and went out kr. Oskol, capturing bridgeheads on its right bank. On the night of July 3, the main forces of the 21st and 40th armies of the 13th tank corps were surrounded. There was a real threat of a new catastrophe in the south. Stalin demanded from Marshal S.K. Tymoshenko to take urgent measures to eliminate this threat.

And again the seemingly inexhaustible reserves came to the rescue. The Bryansk Front received two tank corps, three fresh combined arms armies - the 6th, 60th, and 63rd (a total of 22 rifle divisions). General A.M. arrived at the Bryansk Front to assist in organizing the strike. Vasilevsky, who had just been appointed Chief of the General Staff.

The Soviet command pinned special hopes on the 5th Panzer Army, led by the strong-willed and energetic General A.I. Lizyukov, who became famous for his decisive actions during the battles on the Dnieper in July 1941, for which he was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, which was rare at that time. General Lizyukov, who received another tank corps under his command, was given the task of attacking the flank and rear of the German group that had reached the approaches to

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Voronezh. The impact of this powerful (over 530 tanks) combined nation, with appropriate provision and support, could really make a difference. Enemy forces by that time

BEHIND. Kilichenkov 225

men were greatly stretched and bogged down in the fighting on the outskirts of Voronezh. However, this time too, the problems of organizing a counterstrike were beyond the strength of the Soviet military leaders. The command of the Bryansk Front, to which the army was subordinated, failed to ensure the entry of the tank army into the battle, and

this task had to be solved by General A.M. Vasilevsky. But the chief of the General Staff only managed to set a general task - to reach the enemy's communications, after which he was recalled by the Headquarters. As a result, the tank army was left without the support of front-line reinforcements - aviation, artillery, without reconnaissance data. In fact, the tankers were left to their own devices. To top it all, it was not possible to concentrate all the forces by the appointed time; they had to again throw units into battle in parts. On July 4, only the 7th tank corps of General P.A. was able to go on the offensive. Rotmistrov. But by that time the enemy had already opened up the preparations for a counterattack and was able to quickly organize a tough anti-tank defense. Formations of the 5th Army were able to advance only 15-20 km, and at this point the offensive stalled. The losses of the tank army turned out to be extremely heavy, its commander also died, the tank army itself was disbanded.

As a result, by July 7, the German advanced units advanced 160-170 km, reaching the Don in the Voronezh region and deeply enveloping the troops of the Southwestern Front from the north. The break of the Soviet front was about 300 km. Using the success achieved and the disorganization of the Soviet front of defense, the German command is planning Operation Clausewitz, its goal is a giant cauldron in the big bend of the Don, encirclement of the troops of the Southwestern Front.

But now the Headquarters is no longer thinking about counterattacks and offensive actions. On July 6, it was decided to withdraw the troops of the Southwestern and Southern fronts to the east. At the same time, measures were taken to prepare the defense on the outskirts of Stalingrad and the Caucasus. The enemy, however, did not give respite to the retreating units of the Red Army, the tank divisions of General E. Kleist quickly advanced along the right bank of the Don, creating a real threat of deep coverage and encirclement of the

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of the South-Western Front. On the steppe expanses, the offensive power of the Wehrmacht's tank divisions had its full effect. The Soviet command simply did not have time to recreate a single line of defense, the enemy was always ahead of him, breaking the front in one place, then in another. In addition, the big bend of the Don itself turned into a natural bag, covering the troops of three Soviet fronts. Stalin had no choice but to order the armies to move to the left bank of the Don and organize a tough defense there. On July 9-11, the troops of the Southwestern and on July 15 formations of the Southern Fronts received an order to withdraw. At the same time, the Southwestern Front was disbanded, its troops were divided between the Southern Front and the new Stalingrad Front. Marshal Timoshenko was removed from the post of commander and was assigned to a less responsible sector - the North-Western Front.

Hitler, dissatisfied with the mistakes made, removed Field Marshal F. von Bock from his post as commander of the army group, replacing him with General M. Weichs, and took over the overall command of the group of troops operating in the southern direction.

leniya. A new attempt to capture the retreating formations of the former Southwestern Front was a success. K. On July 15, the tanks of the armies of G. Goth and E. Kleist went behind the rear of the 38th, 9th and part of the forces of the 24th armies. The threat of a new grandiose encirclement and catastrophe of the entire southern flank of the Soviet front arose again. Units and formations of the Red Army randomly rolled back to the east, trying to break out of the encirclement. Columns of thousands of army units, thousands of carts, cars, tractors, tanks, guns, hundreds of thousands of refugees walked along the endless steppe roads, shrouded in clouds of dust, under the scorching July sun. All this was painfully reminiscent of the tragic pictures of the beginning of the war.

The armies were retreating. The faces of the people were gloomy. Dust covered their clothes, weapons, dust fell on the muzzles of guns, on the tarpaulin that covered the boxes with staff documents, on the black lacquered covers of staff typewriters, on the suitcases, bags, boxes randomly piled on carts, - described the summer retreat of 1942 Mr. Vasily Gross

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man. - Gray dry dust penetrated the nostrils and throat. Her lips were dry and cracked. This dust penetrated into human souls and hearts, it made people's eyes restless, it overflowed in the arteries and veins, and the blood of the fighters became gray from it. It was a terrible dust - the dust of retreat. It corroded faith, it extinguished the heat of the heart, it cloudy stood before the eyes of the gunner and the shooter. There were moments when people forgot about duty, about their strength, about their formidable weapon, and a cloudy feeling took possession of them. German tanks hummed along the roads. Day and night, German dive-bombers hung over the Don crossings, whistling over the Messers wagons. Smoke, fire, dust, mortal stuffiness...»'.

The retreat in the south proved to be a severe test for the morale of the Red Army. The defeats near Leningrad, in terms of the number of losses, were not much inferior to the catastrophe in the south, but the whole country lived with the idea that the main events were taking place on the southern flank, the outcome of the war was being decided there. And that is why the defeats in the Crimea and near Kharkov were perceived so painfully. In addition, another factor was influencing. The defeats of 1942 could not be explained by a surprise attack, as Stalin did in July 1941. Moreover, everyone remembered the upsurge, the almost euphoria of the winter successes near Moscow, and Stalin's promise to crush the enemy in the coming year.

Special departments of the NKVD recorded "a number of anti-Soviet, defeatist and treacherous statements ... in connection with the movement of units and formations of the South-Western Front to new

, frontiers": ;

From the memorandum of the Special Department of the NKVD of the South-Western Front to the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR L.P. Beria,

July 5, 1942:

"Deputy commander of the 76 C! Discussion of the situation at the front among senior commanders, Lieutenant Colonel Vasilyev said: "... I now have the impression that September 1941 is repeating itself. Then we also pulled together,

1 Cited. by: Beshanov V.V. Decree. op. S. 286.

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they concentrated, and then abandoned everything, remaining surrounded. This music can be repeated even now ... "

The commander of the 214th Artillery Regiment of the 38th Rifle Division] of the Division, Lieutenant Colonel Gurylev, among a number of commanders, said: "... It is necessary to tear off the insignia during the withdrawal so that they don't shoot. In this war, you will die for nothing. Where is our aviation? The newspapers write about our aviation - all this is nonsense. German aviation is good, but we have coffins ... Peace will soon be concluded with Germany, because the fight against it is pointless, and we have nothing to fight with ... The Germans have equipment, and we have even more blood ... "

Pilipchuk, a Red Army soldier of the 1059th Rifle Regiment, in the presence of a number of Red Army soldiers, stated: "... It is clear during the course of the war that the Red Army cannot defeat the German army, and the German from Ukraine will not leave anywhere. Happy is the one who remained in the rear of the Germans, lives happily ever after and works at home ... "

Red Army soldier 349 From [rifle] D[ivizia] Makogonov told the Red Army men of his unit: "... If everyone turned their weapons against commissars and commanders, then in ten minutes the war would end and individual farming would be restored again and there would be plenty of food ...".

In the second half of July, the armies of the Stalingrad and Southern fronts retreated to the left bank of the Don, they managed to avoid complete encirclement and destruction. But the losses incurred turned out to be extremely high - 568,347 soldiers and officers (of which 370,522 were irretrievable, including about 80,000 prisoners). The losses of equipment turned out to be colossal - 2,436 tanks, 13,716 guns and mortars, 783 combat aircraft, 488.6 thousand small arms². During the same period, the Wehrmacht lost 91,400 people on the entire Eastern Front, irretrievable losses amounted to about 19 thousand soldiers and officers?

Forgotten battles on the Rzhev ledge. While the main, according to contemporaries, events unfolded in the South, no less bloody battles took place in

b The Stalingrad epic: Materials of the NKVD of the USSR ... S. 148-152. ? See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century...S. 278, 484. 3 See Beshanov V.V. Decree. op. S. 284.

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down direction. However, to this day they are very poorly covered by Russian historiography. |

As a rule, these events are not mentioned at all in history textbooks; at best, they are mentioned in passing, casually. |

Very stingy in the description and memoirists - participants in these battles. Historians are much more attracted by the grandiose events that unfolded in the south, where at that time the German divisions, having broken through the Soviet defenses, were rapidly advancing towards the Volga and the Caucasus.

For this reason, the battles that unfolded in the Moscow direction for the so-called "Rzhevsky ledge", or the Rzhev-Vyazma bridgehead, seemed to be in the shadow of the beginning battles for Stalingrad and the Caucasus.

Meanwhile, on this strategic foothold, up to 200 km wide along the front and up to 160 km deep in the direction of Moscow, there were four German armies, which had in their composition on July 1, 1942. about 70 divisions aimed at Moscow, which made the Soviet command very nervous, expecting a new enemy attempt to capture the capital. They were opposed by the troops of the Kalinin, Western Fronts and part of the forces of the Bryansk Front. In addition, all the Stavka's strategic reserves were concentrated in the Moscow direction.

In the second half of 1942, the Soviet troops repeatedly tried to "cut off" this ledge, surrounding and destroying the enemy forces, but again and again rolled back, suffering heavy losses.

In a sense, the "Rzhev salient" became a kind of "Stalingrad in reverse", grinding the Soviet divisions in fruitless assaults in order to capture a piece of land. In the summer and autumn, the troops of the Western and Kalinin fronts carried out two Rzhev-Sychevsk operations here, which were led by the best Soviet commanders, the future "stars" of the Soviet military galaxy - G.K. Zhukov, I.S. Konev, K.K. Ro Kossovsky. Operations that entailed colossal casualties, operations that ended with little or no result

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but, the operations have not yet attracted worthy attention of researchers'.

In full accordance with the "active defense" plan adopted by the Headquarters for the spring-summer campaign of 1942, a number of major offensive operations were also planned in the western direction. Already in May, an operation was planned to destroy the forces of the two armies of the Western Front

that - the 16th (commander - General K.K. Rokossovsky) and the 61st (commander - General M.M. Popov) groups against the nickname near Bryansk. As before, it was supposed to carry out a deep envelopment of the enemy, the decisive role in this was assigned to the tank corps attached to the 16th Army, which was supposed to break through the enemy defenses and bring the corps into

'breakthrough. By that time, tank corps reappeared in the Red Army and began to form the first tank armies. The Soviet command regained those very "armored fists" that were so ingloriously lost in the first weeks of the war. But now their structure turned out to be more balanced - the corps had fewer tanks, but there was more artillery and means of communication. This gave the tank corps the possibility of independent action in the depths of the enemy's defenses and was supposed to ensure their effective command and control.

The actions of one of the newly created tank corps as part of the Western Front became one of the first attempts by the Soviet command to use these formations for the purpose of deep breakthroughs in the enemy defenses and subsequent encirclement. But in reality, everything turned out differently.

} It is noteworthy that both in the statistical essays of the Ministry of Defense and in the joint work of the Institute of Military History and the Institute of Russian Academy of Sciences, these operations are mentioned literally in a nutshell. (See: Classified as classified: Losses of the Armed Forces of the USSR in wars, military operations and conflicts: Statistical study / Under the general editorship of V.G. Krivosheev. - M.: Voenizdat, 1993, p. 225; Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century: Statistical study. - M.: OLMA-PRESS, 2001, p. 312; Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Military-historical essays. - Book 2. M., 1998. P. 213- 214)

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From the memoirs of Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky:

"The time has come to bring in a tank corps. But he wasn't where he was supposed to be. "It was smooth on paper, but they forgot about the ravines ..." - says the proverb. On the way of the movement of the corps, a small river flowed with swampy peaty banks. That's where our body was stuck. While developing the entry plan, they forgot to reconnoiter and check the patency... It took two hours to pull the hull to the place of entry into battle. The Germans did not waste these two hours in vain. Will they bring up forces from the depths and from different directions ...

Forty dive bombers formed a circle over the battlefield. First of all, they attacked the lead tank brigade, which, beautifully turning around, passed a height of two or three kilometers behind our advancing infantry. And then something incredible happened: instead of rushing forward, the brigade stopped. She stood on a bare height, and the "Junkers" bombarded her ...

Watching this picture, I could not stay still. Ordered the corps commander to speed up the movement of the main forces and carry out the assigned task. With the corps commissar Latyshev, with Orel and several staff officers, we rushed in cars to the tank brigade that was standing under the bombardment. Colonel Oryol ran up to the tank and began banging on the turret with a stone, calling for the commander. Latyshev did the same, and I had to do it, being careful not to get under the caterpillar if the driver decides to turn around. In a word, our situation was not a happy one. Fortunately, everything turned out well, we still forced the brigade to move and help the infantry, which was already hard.

The unsuccessful introduction of the tank corps into battle predetermined the failure of the whole plan as a whole. The enemy quickly determined the place of the main attack and instantly transferred his aircraft to this sector, and then the reserves. The offensive fizzled out. Despite the fact that the 16th Army was commanded by one of the best Soviet commanders, it was not possible to ensure effective control of a powerful tank formation. Not

! Rokossovsky K.K. Decree. op. pp. 159-160.

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The front command, headed by General of the Army G.K., also looked better. Zhukov - at the most decisive moment, the advancing troops found themselves without air cover, and German aviation, as if on a training ground, bombed and shot Soviet infantry and tanks. But not only that. According to K.K. Rokossovsky, "it was also bad that for some reason the front command did not always consider it an obligation to let the army commander into their plans, that is, they did not inform about the role assigned to the army in this operation on a front scale. In this case, it was like this.

Despite the failure of the May offensive, in the first half of July a new attempt was made to defeat the enemy's 2nd Panzer Army near Bryansk. The operation was personally led by the front commander, General G.K. Zhukov. But this time, despite the fact that three armies already participated in the offensive - the 10th, 16th and 61st, whose operations from the air were provided by a powerful aviation group, and two corps - a tank and cavalry, it was not possible to break through the enemy defenses. The armies, having suffered heavy losses, went over to the defensive in the same positions.

As a "retaliatory move", the German 9th Army, located on the Rzhev-Vyazemsky bridgehead, conducted an operation against the 39th Army (commander - General I.I. Maslennikov) of the Kalinin Front. This army participated in the winter offensive, with the task of reaching Vyazma and, together with the 33rd Army of the Western Front, encircling the main forces of Army Group Center. The army of General Maslennikov advanced almost 100 km deep into the German defenses, but it did not succeed in connecting with the troops of the Western Front, and the 39th Army itself

was in a semicircle. Commander of the Kalinin Front, General I.S. Konev hoped to use the protruding position of Maslennikov's army for a further offensive, but he took little care to hold the neck of this "sack". The enemy did not wait. In early July, the Germans did not carry an unexpected and powerful blow to the base of the ledge and closed the encirclement ring, in which not only the 39th

1 Rokossovsky K. K. S. 171.

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army, but also the 11th Cavalry Corps. General I.S. Konev tried to break through the encirclement, but to no avail. Once again, the front command failed to provide its encircled troops with everything necessary to create a stable defense. By the end of July, the "cauldron" was liquidated. Only a small number of soldiers and officers left the encirclement, including General I.I. Maslennikov.

At the same time, even more bloody battles broke out on the other flank of the Western Front, during the first Rzhev-Sychevsk operation. It was planned to completely defeat the German group located on the "Rzhevsky ledge". The offensive was to be carried out by the adjacent flanks of the Western and Kalinin fronts. And although the experience of the battles of the winter campaign showed that the problem of ensuring the interaction of neighboring fronts remained weakly solvable for the Soviet military leaders, Zhukov remained true to himself, preferring the scale and decisiveness of the planned operations.

The Kalinin Front, with the forces of the 30th and 29th armies, was to strike at Rzhev, and the right wing of the Western Front - the 31st and 20th armies - was tasked with breaking through the defenses in the Sychev direction. To the south, in the general direction of Vyazma and Sychevka, two more armies of the Western Front were to operate - the 5th and 33rd.

The preparation of this offensive for that time was not usually thorough and large-scale. First of all, huge forces were concentrated. The Kalinin, Western and attracted part of the forces of the Bryansk Front consisted of 20 (!) armies, almost 140 divisions, about 1,400 tanks, a powerful artillery grouping, from the air the offensive was supposed to be provided by two air armies - 19 air divisions. This time, the Soviet command had time to prepare troops for the offensive.

From the memoirs of a soldier of the 711th regiment of the 215th rifle division
B.S. Gorbachevsky:

"There were often massive mixed exercises on the scale of a regiment and even a division, in which tankers and artillerymen simultaneously participated: we climbed on tanks and

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Together with them we went on the "offensive" ... We were constantly wet, exhausted, but, understanding the significance of the actions of the commanders, we did not grumble ... For whole days we crawled along the ground; we were taught how to dig faster and deeper into the ground, how to fire on the move, from the hip, how to better equip machine gun nests, how not to panic on the battlefield, how to suppress enemy firing points. And that was far from all. We were explained and shown how to act in order to rapidly close with the enemy, how to protect ourselves from enemy fire in battle and in the trenches, how to go on the attack, how to behave in the face of enemy aircraft ... We were literally trained to the point of exhaustion. ..."1.

When planning an offensive, General G.K. Zhukov clearly sought to use the experience he had gained in the Khalkhin-Gol operation. Preparations were provided by disinformation and camouflage measures unprecedented in scale and intensity. Their goal was to mislead the enemy about the direction of the upcoming strike. The concentration of the strike force of the front on its left flank was demonstrated. And it must be said that the enemy was really disoriented and expected a Soviet offensive under the base of the entire Rzhev-Vyazma salient. The very configuration of the front in this area made the idea of hitting under the base of the ledge extremely attractive. But, apparently, General G.K. Zhukov also took into account his unsuccessful experience of the January offensive, when, for the sake of the prospect of encircling the main forces of Army Group Center near Vyazma, the real opportunity to encircle and destroy the 4th German Panzer Group was missed.

This time, Zhukov decides to limit himself to the task of encircling only the 9th army of the enemy in the "Rzhevsky ledge", and for this the direction of the main attack fell almost in the center of the ledge. In the breakthrough area, as a result of the secrecy of concentration, it was possible to achieve a 4-fold superiority in people, 6-fold in artillery and more than 7-fold in

m: Orbachevsky B.S. Rzhev meat grinder. Courage time. The challenge is you LIVE! - M.: Yauza, Eksmo, 2007. S. 121-122.

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tanks!. On top of everything, it was possible to ensure the complete surprise of the offensive. On July 30, formations of the Kalinin Front went over to the offensive, and five days later the offensive of the Western Front also began. The concentration density of the Soviet artillery on both fronts and the duration of the artillery preparation were such that the enemy's first lines of defense were simply swept away. But the offensive of the Kalinin Front soon stalled, neither the 30th nor the 29th armies could advance further. By the end of the first two days. Western troops

front broke through the enemy defenses and deepened by 25 km². The front commander decides to bring his mobile reserve into the breach—two tank and one cavalry corps. But the enemy, realizing the threat of encirclement of the forces of the 9th Army in the northern part of the ledge, began to prepare a counterattack, transferring reserves. Now everything depended on whose maneuver with reserves would be faster. On the side of the enemy there was a serious advantage - the presence of the Rzhev - Vyazma - Yukhnov railway, which ran along almost the entire front line.

And this time, the competition in organizing the transfer of reserves was won by the German command. All German aviation was aimed at the nearest rear of the advancing Soviet tank corps, it managed to destroy river crossings, access roads, and disrupt supplies. The introduction of tank corps into the gap was delayed. To top it all off, heavy rain began to pour, immediately turning the roads into an impenetrable mess of clay. Even tanks, not to mention wheeled vehicles, made their way through the swamps of mud with incredible difficulty. The advance of Soviet reserves was hopelessly late from the very beginning. The enemy, practically not encountering opposition from Soviet aviation, quickly transferred reserves, and on August 7 they left to the river. Vazuza, the Soviet tank corps clashed with two German tank divisions. A fierce oncoming battle flared up, ending by 10 August. Neither side was able to advance

1 See: Beshanov V.V. Decree. op. S. 321.

2 See History of World War II. 1939-1945 V.5. M.: Military Publishing House, 1975. S.245-246.

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further. An attempt by General G.K. Zhukov failed to achieve a turning point in the course of the operation by going on the offensive of the 5th (commander - General I.I. Fedyuninsky) and 33rd (commander - General M.S. Khozin) armies on the left flank of the front. None of these armies managed to break through the front.

By August 23, the first Rzhev-Sychevsk operation was completed. But the fighting in this direction continued, their intensity did not decrease at all, moreover, it reached the highest tension! The command of the Soviet armies, unable to crack the German defense, began to "gnawing through" it, to which the remaining reserves were thrown. Among them was the mentioned 215th Rifle Division of the 30th Army. For three months the division was preparing for battles, and on August 24 it was its turn.

From the memoirs of a soldier of the 711th regiment of the 215th rifle division
B.S. Gorbachevsky:

"We are attacking in the forehead, in echelons, the company is not advancing in the first chain - in front of us, others are hurrying behind us; those who succeed, try to follow the tanks - after all, protection, but it is there, in front, we have not yet caught up with the tanks. Forward, forward, but the heights remain

elk three hundred meters, we have already covered more than half the way! .. And the German trenches are shouting. The devastating fire, growing stronger every minute, immediately stuns all the attackers with a machine-gun barrage. Mortars hoarsely barked after the machine guns. Artillery boomed. Huge fountains of earth shot up high with the living and the dead. Thousands of fragments, like poisonous scorpions, dig into people, tear the bodies and the ground. How so?! It turns out that our gunners did not reconnoiter the location of the firing points ... "2.

After the very first attack in the rifle company, where the author of the memoirs served, out of 136 soldiers and officers, only 8 people remained in the ranks (!). The subsequent battle turned into battles of "local significance" stretching for weeks and months, in which the Soviet troops simply bled to death. The surviving students

| For more details, see: Gerasimova S.A. Rzhev 42. Positional massacre. - M.: Yau za, Eksmo, 2007. S. 121-145.

..: Orbachevsky B.S. Decree. op. S. 142.

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The fans of these battles subsequently recalled these battles as the most terrible of the entire war. Both sides, both then and after, compared Rzhev and Stalingrad. Ilya Ehrenburg, who visited the Rzhev region in September, wrote later: "I did not manage to visit Stalingrad ... But I will not forget Rzhev. Maybe there were offensives that cost more human lives, but it seems that there was no other so sad - for weeks there were battles for five or six broken trees, for the wall of a broken house and a tiny hillock ... ". The overall result of this "second Verdun" was the very "corpse fields" that almost all participants in the battle write about. |

From the memoirs of a participant in the battles near Rzhev P.A. Mishina:

"We were advancing on Rzhev through corpse fields. During the Rzhev battles, many "valleys of death" and "groves of death" appeared. It's hard for someone who hasn't been there to imagine what a stinking mess under the summer sun is, consisting of worms covered with worms. thousands of human bodies.

Summer, heat, calm, and ahead - such a "valley of death." It is well visible and shot through by the Germans. There is no way to bypass or bypass it: a telephone cable is laid along it - it is interrupted, and by all means it must be quickly connected. You crawl over the corpses, and they are piled up in three layers, swollen, teeming with worms, emitting a nauseating sweet smell of decomposition of human bodies. This stench hangs motionless over the "valley". The explosion of a shell drives you under the corpses, the soil trembles, the corpses fall on you, showering you with worms, a fountain of pernicious stench beats in your face.

But then fragments flew by, you jump up, shake yourself off and again - forward.

Or in autumn, when it is already cold, it rains, in the trenches the water is knee-deep, their walls are slick, at night the Germans suddenly attack, jump into the trench. Hand-to-hand is tied. If you survived, keep your eyes open again, hit, shoot, maneuver, trample on corpses lying under water...

1 Cited. by: Gerasimova S.A. Rzhev 42... S. 134.

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And what is it like for a soldier to go on the attack on a meg bullet for the fifth time! Jump over your own dead and wounded, who fell here in previous attacks. Every second, wait for a familiar push in the chest or leg. We fought for every German trench, the distance between which was 100 - 200 meters, and even for a grenade throw. The trenches changed hands several times a day. Often half the trenches were occupied by the Germans, and the other half by us ... "".

The Soviet command actually managed to covertly prepare a large-scale operation on two fronts, carry out a quick breakthrough of the enemy's defenses in narrow sections of the front, and introduce mobile formations into the breakthrough. But the success achieved could not be built on. The reason for this was the same underestimation of the entire complexity of organizing the operation and command and control of troops in its course.

. At the very beginning of the offensive, heavy rains broke out, which sharply slowed down the advance of the troops. Apparently, the forecast for years in the process of planning and determining the timing of the operation was not taken into account. Intelligence was not up to the mark either. If the enemy's line of defense itself was sufficiently studied, then the second line of defense and the nearest rear were a mystery to the Soviet troops. The work of the rear was extremely poorly organized - by the end of the second day of the offensive, the shock group of the 20th Army had only 0.2-0.5 ammunition and half of the fuel refueling?. The problem of command and control of the troops that had gone into the breakthrough turned out to be intractable. It was extremely rare to establish and maintain radio contact. Mainly because of the inability and often unwillingness of the commanders of units and formations to use it because of the fear of being detected by German radio intelligence. And this is all in the second year of the war! We had to rely on the same liaison delegates, about whom so much was said at the meetings of the Red Army command staff before the war.

1 Mikhin P.A. "Artillerymen, Stalin gave the order!" We died to win. - M.: Yauza, Eksmo, 2006. S. 103-104.

2 Sy: History of the Second World War. 1939-1945 V.5. M.: Military Publishing House, 1975. S.246

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One of the most gross miscalculations, repeated more than once, was a catastrophic underestimation of the importance of air supremacy. Soviet aviation was limited to supporting ground troops during the breakthrough of the defense, and the troops that went into the breakthrough were left without air cover. Moreover, anti-aircraft weapons usually lagged behind the advanced units, and they remained virtually defenseless against the German assault aircraft, which acted as in exercises. The combat effectiveness and morale of the troops, subjected to constant and unpunished air strikes, quickly fell.

In addition to these shortcomings that existed before, others also emerged. In fact, the battles for the Rzhev-Vyazemsky ledge became the first experience of offensive operations of the Red Army in the conditions of a stabilized front line. If in the summer-autumn of 1941, the Soviet troops had to advance mainly in the process of delivering counterattacks, during the winter campaign of 1941/42. the offensive was carried out against the retreating enemy, who retained only separate centers of defense, then in the spring and summer of 1942, the Red Army faced the task of breaking through the prepared and heavily fortified defense. And although behind him there was experience in breaking through the "Mannerheim Line", but he did not help. In fact, the mistakes of the first period of the "winter war" were repeated. During the offensive near Rzhev, tactical commanders often relied on "reserving manpower and means of combat in the formations of the battle formations of the regiments (2-3 echelon) ...", the infantry "acted in crowded formations, as if on the front, and in depth, which is why it suffered unnecessary losses ... There was almost no combination of fire and movement in battle formations, which made it possible for the enemy to fire with impunity at close distances on moving dense battle formations and inflict sensitive losses ... regiment commanders and new battalions ... sent their units in the forehead or fire meshes

1 The study and use by the command staff of the Red Army of both their own and other people's experience during the Second World War is a topic, although very promising, but extremely voluminous. Therefore, it certainly requires independent research.

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ki. The battle formations were built in densely, fearing that the second echelons would not have time to get involved in the battle at the right time, and kept them in the zone of artillery and mortar fire. This tactic became the direct cause of those very "corpse fields and rosh".

From the memoirs of a participant in the battles near Rzhev P.A. Mi-

hina:

"Our whole tragedy consisted in the fact that we were advancing, going around the swampy forests, along the floodplains of numerous rivers and streams, along the shores of countless lakes, along the hills and ridges of the Valdai and Smolensk uplands, under the endless bombing of enemy aircraft, often found ourselves living without food and ammunition in deserted swamps and without any hope of their help, while the Germans blocked communications with the rear and kept their defenses in dry places that towered above our positions, in well-equipped bunkers and dugouts. Our soldiers and officers fought selflessly and heroically near Rzhev and Vyazma, Sychevka and Pogorely Gorodishche, near Olenin and Bely. The most offensive thing for a soldier in war is when, with all his courage, endurance, ingenuity, devotion to the cause, selflessness, he cannot defeat a well-fed, arrogant, well-armed enemy, occupying a more advantageous position - for reasons beyond his control: due to the lack of weapons, ammunition, food, aviation support, and the remoteness of the rear. Our soldiers and officers were not to blame for the fact that the commanders, urged on by Stalin, carried out military operations that were not supported financially, and primarily from the air, although they were daring and wonderful by design.

However, in his memoirs G.K. Zhukov explained the failure of Chu in the first Rzhev-Sychev operation solely about Stalin's accounts: "If we had one and two armies at our disposal, it would be possible, in cooperation with Kalininsky

Cit. by: Gerasimova S.A. Rzhev 42...S. 140.

² Mikhin P.A. Decree. op. S. 102.

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front not only to defeat the Rzhev grouping, but also the entire Rzhev-Vyazma group of German troops, to significantly improve the operational situation in the entire western strategic direction. Unfortunately, this real opportunity was missed by the Supreme High Command.

It is difficult to understand the logic of G.K. Zhukov. On the one hand, he reproaches Stalin for his invariable desire to attack simultaneously in all directions, dispersing his forces. On the other hand, Georgy Konstantinovich himself plans and conducts an operation to defeat two German armies on opposite flanks of his front, in conditions when he himself lacks "one or two armies." In addition, it should be noted that at the disposal of the Soviet commander, under whose command both fronts - the Western and Kalinin - passed at the beginning of the operation, were very impressive forces - 18 armies, more than 120 divisions. In addition, during the operation, Zhukov also received at his disposal an entire tank army - the 3rd tank army of General P.L. Romanenko. In other words, the Soviet command once again failed to locate

dressed up with available forces, scattered them in several directions, and as a result - bloody operations with unclear results.

The results of the general attack on the Rzhev-Vyazemsky ledge turned out to be very modest. Soviet troops advanced 30-45 km deep into the enemy defenses, liberating the regional centers of Zubtsov, Karmanovo and Polunino, reached the left bank of the Volga and the outskirts of Rzhev, but they could not take the city. The price turned out to be incommensurable with the result - the troops of the two fronts lost 193,683 people killed and wounded (56% of the total), daily losses amounted to 7,747 people killed and wounded Rzhev expressed A.T. Tvardovsky:

and Zhukov G.K. Decree. op. S. 294. ? See:
Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 311-312.

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I was killed near Rzhev,

. In a nameless swamp, In the fifth
company, on the left, During a cruel
raid. I didn't hear the gap, I didn't
see that flash - Just into the
abyss from the cliff - And neither the
bottom nor the tire. And in this whole world,
Until the end of his days, No
buttonholes, no stripes From my
tunic. I am where the blind
roots Seek food in the darkness; I
am where with a cloud of dust
Walks rye on a hill [...] Where a
blade of grass in a blade of
grass A river of grass spins - Where
even a mother will not come to
the
wake

[...].

Defeat in the Sinyavinsky swamps. In August-September 1942, the Soviet troops made another, fourth in a row, attempt to break through the blockade of Leningrad'. This time it was planned to deliver a simultaneous counterattack in the area of the schliiss of the Selburg-Sinyavino ledge, where the troops of the two Soviet fronts were separated by a narrow strip occupied by the enemy. The commander of the Volkhov Front, General K.A. Meretskov later recalled: "Only a 16-kilometer space

in, occupied and fortified by the enemy, separated the troops of the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts. It seemed to be enough

ü The first attempt was made by the Soviet troops as early as September 1941, immediately after the blockade of the city by the German troops. Parts of the 54th Army under the command of Marshal G.I. Kulik struck in the direction of Sinyavino, but due to unorganized interaction with the troops of the Leningrad Front, the attempt failed. The following attempts were pre-. Adopted in October 1941 and January-April 1942. They also turned out to be unsuccessful due to major errors in the organization of strikes. (See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. RoenNO-historical essays. - Book 2. M., 1998. P. 197.).

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one strong blow, and the troops of the two fronts will unite. There were grounds for such optimism: solid forces were involved in the operation - the troops of the three armies of the Leningrad (commander - Lieutenant General L.A. Govorov) and Volkhov fronts with a total strength of over 190,000 people. Their actions were supported by two air armies, as well as ships of the Baltic Fleet and the Ladoga military flotilla. In general, Soviet troops had a significant superiority over the enemy. Thus, formations of the Volkhov Front outnumbered the German troops opposing them by more than three times in terms of the number of personnel, four times in the number of tanks, and twice in artillery and mortars.

The operation began to be prepared back in July, paying special attention to ensuring secrecy and working out interaction. But the task of preparation was extremely complicated by the inconvenience of the terrain.

From the memoirs of Marshal K.A. Meretskova:

"I have seldom encountered terrain less suitable for an offensive. I will always remember endless forest distances, swampy swamps, peat fields flooded with water and broken roads. A difficult struggle with the enemy was accompanied by an equally difficult struggle with nature. In order to fight and live, the troops were forced to build wooden and earthen fences instead of trenches, instead of shooting trenches - bulk open areas, lay log stilts and gati for many kilometers and build wooden platforms for artillery and mortars ... Extensive peat extraction, Stretching from the coast of Ladoga to the village of Sinyavino, and to the south of Sinyavi, but solid forests with large swamps, difficult to pass even for infantry, sharply hampered the maneuver of troops and created more benefits for the defending side. Almost the only dry place in this direction was the Sinyavinsky

"

Meretskov K.A. In the service of the people. - M., 1968. S.299 / Military literature [Electronic resource]. - Access mode : B&p://liega.hb.gy/teto/gazzap/tegebcow/llaex. Wit

2 See: Mikhail Khodarenok, Oleg Vladimirov. Tragedy in the Sinyavinskie swamps//NVO, 04/05/2002. at

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heights that rose 10-15 meters above the surrounding flat plain. Naturally, it was they who became the key position on the offensive path of our troops, especially since the enemy had a circular view of several kilometers from them. For eleven months, the German troops who were in charge here did everything to ensure that the Schlisselburg-blue Vinsky ledge was impregnable. Along all natural frontiers, along rivers and lakes, along ravines and swamps, along heights and in forests, defensive positions stretched with many nodes of resistance and strongholds. Artillery and mortar batteries were located in the center of resistance nodes. The density of anti-tank guns averaged seven to eight per kilometer of front. The personnel were housed in strong dugouts, and the front line was covered with wire and mine-explosive barriers!

The assessment given by the enemy to this area is interesting. Field Marshal E. Manstein, whose army was deployed near Leningrad after the capture of Sevastopol, wrote: "... we would never have organized a breakthrough in such a place">?.

In these difficult conditions, the Soviet command needed to covertly transfer 13 rifle divisions, 8 rifle and 6 tank brigades, over 20 artillery regiments and a significant number of other special units and subunits to the concentration areas? The current situation was aggravated by the fact that the German command itself at that time was finishing preparations for the assault on Leningrad. For this, additional forces and the 11th army of E. Manstein, inspired by recent victories in the Crimea and determined to capture another "fortress by the sea", were intended.

The Soviet command made a number of miscalculations this time as well. It was not possible to keep the preparations for the offensive secret and

. Meretskov K.A. Decree op. P. 300 / Military literature [Electronic re SURS]. - Access mode: Vlr://tiega.N6.go/teto/gazap/ptegeKou/ 1p4deh.Vet

2 Manstein E. Decree. op. S. 323.

3 See: History of World War II. 1939-1945.T. 5. S. 239.

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ensure simultaneous actions of the fronts. As a result, when on August 19 the troops of the Leningrad Front launched an offensive,

the enemy was already ready to repulse the blow, and the offensive of the Volkhov Front began only on August 27. At first, the Soviet troops managed to achieve some success. Numerous artillery of the Volkhov Front broke into the enemy defenses, and formations of the 8th Army, Lieutenant General F.N. Starikov advanced 8-9 km in two days. Coming to the Sinyavino station, they surrounded one of the regiments of the 227th German Infantry Division. At the same time, units of the Leningrad Front launched a new blow with the aim of breaking through to Sinyavin. Two divisions crossed the Neva, seized a bridgehead on the left bank of the Neva and began to break through the German defenses. Only a few kilometers separated the advancing Soviet troops. The formations of the 18th army of the enemy, located on the schloss of the Selburg-Sinyavino ledge, were about to fall into an encirclement, and only a speedy withdrawal could save them. Now everything depended on the efficiency of the actions of the command of the opposing sides. The command of the Volkhov Front brought two rifle corps into the breach and its main reserve - the long-suffering 2nd Shock Army, restored after the defeat near Myasny Bor (commander - Lieutenant General N.K. Klykov). On the Leningrad Front, three more divisions and a rifle brigade were thrown across the Neva into a new offensive from a bridgehead in the area of Moscow Dubrovka. Into the fight with L.A. Govorov and K.A. Meretskov were joined by the "Hero of the Crimea" and the newly minted Field Marshal E. von Manstein. He later recalled: "On the evening of September 4, Hitler called me. He declared that my immediate intervention in the situation on the Volkhov front was necessary in order to avoid catastrophe. I had to immediately take command of this section of the front and restore the situation with energetic measures. Indeed, on that day, the enemy in the area south of Lake Ladoga made a wide and deep breakthrough of the front of the 18th Army occupied by insignificant forces!

1 Manstein E. Decree. op. S. 322.

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Three divisions of the 11th Army, which had just arrived from near Sevastopol, and several divisions from near Leningrad, were thrown against the advancing Soviet troops. At this stage, success in the confrontation of the parties depended on the organization of the deployment of used reserves into battle. According to K.A. Meretskov, the introduction of Soviet reserves into battle took place "under difficult conditions. The fighters overcame the vast Sinyavinsky swamps, laid roads during the battle and at the same time repelled enemy attacks. The entry of the [4th Guards] Corps into the battle was not properly provided with artillery fire and aviation ... Disorders were also allowed in matters of control, which were violated every now and then! The 2nd Shock Army was introduced into the breach in exactly the same way - in parts, with a great delay and without air cover. °

The German machine still operated without failures. Manstein used the favorite and now classic

tactical technique - a blow under the base of the ledge. On September 22-26, with effective air support, which literally paved the way for the infantry, the German divisions broke through the Soviet defenses at the base of the ledge and surrounded the main forces of the 2nd Shock Army, the 8th Army, and two rifle corps. Meretskov threw all his strength into breaking through the encirclement, these attempts continued until October 1, but were unsuccessful. Significant forces ended up in the cauldron in the Sinyavinsky swamps, only from the composition of the 2nd shock army - 7 rifle divisions, 6 rifle and 4 tank brigades. It would seem that there were opportunities to organize a stable and long-term defense, besides, the nature of the terrain greatly contributed to this, which the German units have just demonstrated. But this time, too, this task turned out to be impossible - no unified command was created, and the encircled units quickly lost control and interaction. The headquarters of the front also failed to establish their supply by air. But even under these conditions

the resistance of the encircled was very fierce. And then-

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: Meretskov K.A. Decree op. P. 311 / Military literature [Electronic re SUrs]. - Access mode: Vir:// tyINega.16.ga/teto/gazap/tegesKou/pdeh.vitl.

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when Field Marshal E. Manstein, not wanting to risk the lives of his soldiers, decided to leave the task of suppressing resistance to technology: victims. In this regard, the army headquarters pulled powerful artillery from the Leningrad Front, which began to fire continuously at the boiler, supplemented by more and more new air attacks. Thanks to this fire, the forest region in a few days was turned into a field pitted with funnels, on which only the remains of the trunks of the once proud giant trees were visible. On October 2, the last pockets of resistance were crushed.

By October 15, the formations of the Volkhov Front were driven back to their original positions. By the same time, the offensive operations of the Leningrad Front, which had not been able to break through the enemy's defenses, had also ceased; its divisions were evacuated back to the right bank of the Neva. As a result of the Sinyavinsk offensive operation, the enemy troops remained in their places. None of the tasks set by the Soviet command was solved. The losses of the Soviet troops in this battle were also very heavy. The total losses of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts amounted to 113,674 people (about 60% of the total), incl. - 40 085 non-refundable?. According to German data, about 12,000 prisoners, over 800 guns and mortars, and 244 tanks were captured. Enemy losses - 25,936 soldiers and officers killed and wounded, of which 4,893% are irretrievable. When referring to

The reasons for the defeat of the Soviet troops in the Sinyavino offensive operation are striking in the repetition of the same mistakes. In January-April 1942, the same 2nd shock army, acting as part of the same Volkhov Front, was surrounded under similar conditions and a month later almost completely

1 E Manstein, Decree. op. pp. 323-324. 2 See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 312. 3 See: Manstein E. Decree. op. p.324

4 See: Mikhail Khodarenok, Oleg Vladimirov. Tragedy in the Sinyavinskie swamps//NVO, 04/05/2002.

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destroyed. The enemy used the same technique - a blow to the flanks at the base of the ledge. But the front command, headed by one of the most experienced Soviet military commanders, General K.A. Meretskov, the former chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, stubbornly repeated the same mistakes. An extremely unfortunate choice of terrain, which did not allow the use of superiority in forces, very poor training of troops, almost complete lack of communications, frequent loss of control and interaction among the troops, disruption of supplies, and, finally, very poor reconnaissance. The problem of supply turned out to be almost insoluble - even the formations introduced into the breach did not have enough ammunition and fuel. Absolutely inexplicable was the decision to use a mass of tanks on practically tank-inaccessible terrain - a continuous forest area with numerous battlefields.

lots, where the tanks were completely unable to realize their main advantages - speed and maneuver. All these shortcomings and mistakes were repeated over and over again, leading to new and new defeats on almost all fronts of the Great Patriotic War, in all campaigns of 1942.

The cruel lessons of 1942. The results of the spring-summer campaign of 1942 were discouraging for the Soviet side. Attempts to de-blockade Leningrad ended in severe defeats, it was not possible to destroy the Rzhev-Vyazemsky bridgehead that threatened Moscow, and, finally, a real catastrophe broke out in the south. The Crimea and Donbass were lost, the enemy reached the Volga and the Caucasus.

The common causes of these most severe defeats were, first of all, the grossest miscalculations of the high command. Stalin overestimated the results of the defeat of the Wehrmacht near Moscow and the offensive capabilities of the Red Army. In fact, even after half a year of the war, Stalin still did not have an adequate idea of the true level of combat capabilities of the Red Army. To some extent, he himself remained in

` Captured by his own explanations of the catastrophe of 1941, really believing that the notorious suddenness and

"temporary advantage" of the enemy. Supreme Glavnoko

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the commander was just beginning to comprehend the most complex art of leading the armed forces on the grandiose scale of a world war. Stalin, still with the obvious distrust that had been preserved from earlier times, treated those people whose judgments did not coincide with his personal opinion. The objections of a number of military leaders about the plans for the spring-summer campaign were simply rejected by him. However, most of the generals did not seek to object to the leader, preferring to speak out in full accordance with his ideas and expectations. Stalin had yet to build a new model of command and control, in which the professional opinion of his subordinates had to be fully taken into account. In the meantime, Stalin tried to manage everything himself through his representatives, in fact, replacing the commanders in the field.

From the memoirs of Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky:

"The headquarters decided to launch a counterattack with the forces of the 5th Panzer Army against the enemy troops that had broken through at the junction of the Bryansk and Southwestern fronts and rushed to Voronezh. But instead of assigning this task to the commander of the Bryansk Front, who by that time had the opportunity to involve not only the 5th Panzer Army, but also other forces to carry it out, the Headquarters took over the entire organization, sending the Chief of the General Staff A.M. . Vasilevsky. He was entrusted with direct control of the operation. Here was also the head of the operational department of the General Staff N.F. Vatutin... At such a crucial moment, when major events are brewing at the front, the Chief of the General Staff especially needs to be in the center, where the main decisions and measures are taken and planned. And it is at this moment that he leaves his place and leaves to lead the operation, replacing, in fact, the front commander ... p

Let me give you a remarkable example. Already after the end of the war, during repeated meetings with Stalin, one could hear from him: "Do you remember when the General Staff was the Commissar of Staff Bokov? .." At the same time, he usually laughed. Yes, unfortunately it happened. Instead of what

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In order to manage the armed forces, being in the center, where all the data on events in the theaters of war flow and where all the nerves of control are concentrated, representatives of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief were sent to the troops. There they, falling under the influence of "local conditions", broke away from the general situation, contributed to the adoption of erroneous decisions by the Headquarters and their attempts to replace the commanders only by

shawl them!"

It was during and as a result of the defeats of 1942 that it became clear that the Red Army, in fact, still did not know how to fight. The Soviet command at almost all levels - from Headquarters to division commanders - was not yet able to effectively manage troops, i.e. to reveal the enemy's plan, to plan one's own actions, to ensure the timely redeployment and deployment of the necessary forces, and the maneuvering of reserves. The commanders of the Red Army were absolutely not given such a type of action as the introduction into battle of large formations, similar to combined arms and tank armies and corps. The rapid redeployment and advance to the initial area, the deployment and, finally, the transition to the offensive of tens of thousands of people and hundreds of tanks required colossal preparatory work by headquarters and the highest organization. But commanders at all levels, from the army commander to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, did not yet fully realize the complexity of this process. The result of these professional "gaps" was failures in the use of tank corps and armies in almost all sectors of the front from the Crimea to Leningrad.

The problem of organizing the interaction of dissimilar forces—rifle formations, tanks, artillery, and aviation—remained insoluble. As a result, having a general superiority in the number of equipment, the command of the Red Army could not provide its infantry with aviation and artillery support, which had such a discouraging effect on the personnel, strengthening the feeling of technical superiority

tivnik, contributing to the demoralization of troops, the fall of discipline E |

' Rokossovsky K.K. Decree. op. pp. 182-183, 233-234.

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lines and panic. These and other shortcomings The command of the Red Army was still trying to compensate in a tried and tested way - "hard order". This feature in the style of command of that time was noted by everyone - from the marshal to the soldier.

From the memoirs of Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky:

"The unenviable situation was aggravated by the unforgivable haste of the Headquarters in its persistent demands made to the front commander, without taking into account the current situation, the forces and means of the enemy. The desire of the Headquarters did not correspond to the capabilities of the troops. Unfortunately, this phenomenon has become deeply rooted, starting from the first days of the war, in all levels of the leading command staff. All authorities considered it necessary to repeat what came from the Headquarters,

although the situation developing at the front at the lower levels by the time the directive was received from above, soon changed and did not correspond to the order received ... Pressure from above, which did not make it possible to organize military operations of the troops within the specified time, led to haste, inconsistencies and disorganized entry units and formations into battle. The Headquarters, the General Staff, and the commanders of the fronts and armies who were inevitably forced to "get in tune with them" were wrong in this.

From the memoirs of General A.V. Gorbatov:

"And the insistent orders were completely incomprehensible to me: despite the failure, to attack again, moreover, from the same starting position, in the same direction for several days in a row, not taking into account that the enemy had already strengthened this area. Many, many times in such cases, my heart bled. It was painful to watch from my vantage point how useless and irretrievable losses were increasing.

" Rokossovsky K.K.S. 233-235. Gorbatov
A.V. Years and wars. - M., 1992. S. 241.

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From the memoirs of the front-line writer V. Bykov:

"The rule ... was complete obedience to elders and merciless cruelty towards subordinates; many succeeded in this during the war. It was the degree of exactingness, and nothing else, that determined the careers of the most outstanding commanders of the Stalinist school!

From the memoirs of Marshal of the Armored Forces A.Kh. Babad Janyana:

"... a communications officer from the commander of the 22nd Army, which included our corps, arrived at the command post and handed me a combat order - to start the offensive today at 16.00, and not tomorrow, as was envisaged by the order of our commander.

- I looked at my watch and showed it to the communications officer:
- - The order is impossible not only because you give it to me two hours after the appointed time. It takes another two hours for the brigade to reach the front line. Neither I nor my commanders have any idea about the enemy defense system, artillery cannot fire without knowing where ...

The communications officer said in response that his business was only to give me a combat order ...

Busy with chores, I did not even notice how a caterpillar all-terrain vehicle stopped not far away and, accompanied by three machine guns,

chikami, three commanders came out of it and approached me.

Are you Colonel Babajanyan?

-I.

- I am the head of the special department of the 22nd army, this is the prosecutor and the chairman of the military tribunal. You are under arrest for failure to comply with a combat order in a combat situation. Hand over your weapons..." 2.

The main reason for the persisting shortcomings of the Soviet management model remained the same extremely low level of professional culture at all levels. There was only one thing left - to learn from our own very painful and paid for with a lot of blood mistakes. The very ability to assimilate experience, draw the necessary lessons and apply

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Bykov V. "For the Motherland, for Stalin!" // Motherland. 1995. No. 5. S. 34. ? Babajanyan A.Kh. Roads of Victory. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1981. S. 97-98.

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their implementation in practice depended on two main factors - from the initial qualities of the commander himself and the rules of conduct dictated by the control system. The Stalinist model of management rigidly dictated the main quality of military (as well as civilian) leaders at all levels - the performer. It was the utmost diligence as an expression of maximum loyalty that was the key to maintaining one's position, and often the life of a leader. The repressions of the 1930s, among other things, had as their task the creation of this very model of leadership. At the same time, absolute diligence in any situation naturally turned the military leaders and the troops entrusted to them into hostages of the mistakes made by Stalin himself. The tragedy of the border fronts, armies and their commanders at the beginning of the war was inevitably dictated by the Stalinist model of government. The same absolute diligence often made it impossible to learn from the experience of the war, since it implied the need to contradict Stalin in case of his erroneous orders, and this was fraught with unpredictable consequences. This feature of the Stalinist style of management was already experienced by G.K. Zhukov.

From the memoirs of Marshal G.K. Zhukov:

"July 29 (1941 - A.K.) I called I.V. Stalin and asked to accept for an urgent report ... Having laid out his cards on the table,

I reported the situation in detail, starting from the northwest and ending with the southwest direction.

- The Southwestern Front must already now be completely withdrawn beyond the Dnieper. Behind the junction of the Central and Southwestern fronts, concentrate reserves of at least five reinforced

VISION.

- But what about Kyiv? - looking at me in a daze, I.V. asked. Stalin...

"Kyiv will have to be abandoned," I said firmly. There was a heavy silence ... I continued the report, trying to be calmer.

- In the western direction, it is necessary to immediately organize a counterattack in order to eliminate the Yelnin ledge ...

- What other counterattacks are there, what kind of nonsense? - flared up

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I.V. Stalin. "Experience has shown that our troops do not know how to attack..." And suddenly he threw out in high tones: "How could you think of surrendering Kyiv to the enemy?"

I couldn't help myself and replied:

"If you think that I, as Chief of the General Staff, can only talk nonsense, then I have nothing to do here. I ask you to release me from my duties as Chief of the General Staff and send me to the front. There I, apparently, will bring more benefit to the Motherland.

Again there was a painful pause.

"You don't get excited," said I.V. Stalin. "But by the way ... we managed without Lenin, and even more so without you ...

Having collected the cards, I left the office with a heavy feeling of my own impotence... About half an hour later I was invited by the Supreme Commander.

`_ That's what, - said I.V. Stalin, we consulted and decided to relieve you of your duties as Chief of the General Staff...

"Where would you like me to go?"

— Where would you like to go?

- I can do any job. I can command a division, a corps, an army, a front.

- Don't get excited, don't get excited. You here reported on the organization of a counterattack near Yelnya. Well, get down to business ... We will appoint you commander of the Reserve Front ... "I.

The readiness to defend one's rightness, confirmed by the experience of the war, required certain personal qualities - self-confidence, professional responsibility, and simply personal courage. In addition, the ability to learn lessons required a certain level of culture, education, flexibility

and critical thinking and, finally, simply military talent. In order for such people to find themselves in their places, it took time and Stalin's awareness of this need. In fact, it was required to put forward a new generation of

' Zhukov G.K. Decree. op. pp. 119-122.

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literacy, since the pre-war "promoted" Stalin in the majority. in their own way were unsuitable for waging modern warfare.

1942 was a turning point in this respect. During the first 14 months of the war, 36 people were in the positions of front commanders, and over the next 32 months, only 7 new commanders appeared! It was towards the end of 1942 that the core of this part of the command staff of the Red Army was formed. During the first year and a half of the war, Stalin's marshals and commanders of the pre-war fronts left their posts and moved to secondary roles - K.E. Voroshilov, G.I. Kulik, S.M. Budyonny, S.K. Timoshenko, F .I.Kuznenov, I.V.Tyulenev and others.

The same process took place at the level of army commanders. In 1941, 110 generals were appointed commanders in 75 armies (the average figure was 1.46); in 1942, 139 generals were replaced at the head of 84 armies (the average figure was 1.65); 82 armies and 118 commanders (average - 1.43), in 1944 - 71 and 105 (average - 1.47) and in 1945 - 67 armies and 80 commanders (average - 1.19) .

At the same time, the losses of the senior command staff of the Red Army at the level of the commander and above in 1941-1942. turned out to be relatively small. During this period, 2 (1 was repressed) commanders of the front out of 36 who served in this post died or died from wounds. In 1941, out of 110 army commanders, 8 died (2 were repressed), and in 1942, out of 139 army commanders, 73 died. spring - summer 1942, the results of this study were far from satisfactory. The rotation of commanders was caused not so much by their losses as by the selection of personnel that was taking place.

1 See; Pechenkin A.A. The highest command staff of the Red Army during the Second World War. - M .: Prometheus, 2002. S. 156-157.

2 Ibid. pp. 161-163. 3 Ibid. pp. 157, 163, 247-270.

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The need for such a mass change of commanders, and in fact, the search for and promotion of a new generation of the highest military elite, was explained by major mistakes made by the top leadership on the eve of the war.

From a letter from Marshal G.K. Zhukov to the head of the Main Directorate of Personnel of the People's Commissariat of Defense, Colonel-General F.I. Golikov, August 22, 1944:

- "When developing a plan for the use and creation of personnel of the Red Army after the war, we must first of all proceed from the experience that we received in the initial period of the Patriotic War:

What will the experience teach?

First, we did not have pre-selected and well-trained commanders of fronts, armies, corps and divisions. At the head of the front stood people who failed one thing after another (Pavlov, Kuznetsov, Popov, Budyonny, Tyulenev, Ryabyshev, Timoshenko, etc.) ...

Even worse was the situation with the commanders of divisions, brigades and regiments. Divisions, brigades, and regiments, especially those of secondary rank, were assigned commanders who were inappropriate for their task.

In short, each of us knows the consequences of the command of these people and what our Motherland experienced by entrusting its fate into the hands of such commanders and commanders.

Conclusions: If we do not want to repeat the mistakes of the past and want to successfully wage war in the future, we must, sparing no expense, train commanders of fronts, armies, corps and divisions in peacetime.

The money spent will be repaid by the successes of the war.

Secondly, we, of course, turned out to be unprepared reserve personnel.

All commanders called up from the reserve, as a rule, did not know how to command regiments, battalions, companies and platoons. All these commanders learned war in war, paying for it with the Blood of our people.

Thirdly, we did not have a cultured staff commander and, as a result, did not have well-knit staffs.

Fourthly, culturally, our officer

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the cadres did not adequately meet the requirements of modern warfare. Modern warfare is an 8/10 war of technology with

the technique of the enemy, which means that you need to be a cultured person in order to be able to quickly deal with your technique and the technique of the enemy and, having figured it out, competently apply your technique.

We must tell the truth that because of the illiteracy and lack of culture of our cadres, we suffered very heavy losses in equipment and manpower, without achieving the possible success.

Fifthly, the system of training and education of our personnel that exists in peacetime did not give us an exemplary and authoritative commander for the war.

But simply nominating new generals was only half the battle, they had to go through a whole school of training. The fact is that the key element of the generals of the Red Army - the commanders of the armies had to be formed almost anew with the outbreak of war. Before World War II, the largest unit in the Soviet armed forces was the rifle corps (with the exception of the 1st and 2nd Special Red Banner armies in the Far East). And only with the beginning of the war in Europe did the process of creating combined arms armies begin in the Soviet armed forces. The process accelerated sharply at the beginning of 1941, when the formation of two dozen armies at once began. Yesterday's commanders of corps and divisions were appointed to the positions of commanders. Exactly half of them had experience of commanding an army for less than three months (mainly during the war with Finland)?. After the start of the Great Patriotic War, another 48 armies were created. And the newly minted commanders had to comprehend the most complex science of army management in the most difficult conditions of the tragic beginning of the war, and thousands of soldiers' lives became the price of its study. Gradually, the war itself selected the most talented military leaders.

Much more tragic was this selection among the commanders of platoons, companies, battalions and regiments. Losses in this link of commanders were especially great. The peak of losses occurred in 1941-1942, when the loss of the officer corps of the Red Army from

From cit. In: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 3. pp. 480-481. ? See: Pechenkin A.A. Decree. op. S. 159.

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placed more than 50%. total officer losses for the entire period of the war. In 1942 alone, the army and navy lost 161,857 officers killed and dead, and 124,488 missing (mostly captured) officers. Among the dead, commanders of platoons, companies and battalions amounted to 146,500 people.

Such a scale of losses meant that the officer corps as a whole was extremely slow to gain experience. The higher was the percentage of casualties, the higher as the army approached the front line, the slower was the accumulation and assimilation of war experience by the officer corps as a whole. However, no matter how great the losses were, some experience was gradually accumulated. The same Vasil Bykov from his soldier's point of view

nia described it this way: "The war, however, taught. Not the old, pre-war science, not military academies, especially short-term and accelerated courses of military schools, but the only personal combat experience that formed the basis of the combat skills of commanders. Gradually, military operations, especially at the lowest level, began to acquire an element of rationality ..."? In this respect time worked for the Red Army. The enemy, having no such manpower reserves, was forced to rely on the preservation of the core of the front-line units, and the inevitable losses gradually undermined the combat power of the Wehrmacht, which over time became more and more difficult to replenish.

In general, the events of the summer of 1942 turned out to be a turning point for the German army. It seemed that the summer campaign, so effectively launched by the Wehrmacht, was about to end with a brilliant victory. But here the enemy again experienced the impact of the specific factors of the war in the east. And if in the campaign of 1941 they turned out to be the autumn thaw, and then the Russian winter - the notorious generals "Mud" and "Moroz", now the German troops have experienced for themselves what the endless Russian steppes and seemingly innumerable Russian reserves mean. The front of the Soviet defense, arching in a gigantic arc and from time to time torn in one place or another, still did not break up.

_ Fell, the troops, even being surrounded, continued Her

' See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 435.
? Bykov V. Decree. op. S. 31.

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fierce resistance, and the space on which the German offensive was carried out, increased and increased, It seemed to be stretched, drawing in and dispersing a few German formations. And instead of the usual strike with an "armored fist", more and more often it was necessary to beat with a "widely pierced five". Having traveled about 400 km in a month, the German troops nevertheless did not achieve the defeat of the Red Army on the southern flank. In this situation, reaching a certain geographical point lost its meaning, because. it did not achieve the goal. Moreover, more and more new armies and divisions arose in place of the already defeated formations of the Red Army. Only in early July, five new combined-arms armies were advanced from the reserve - the 6th, 60th, 62nd, 63rd and 64th. The formation of two new tank armies, the 1st and 4th, was coming to an end, the units of which were already being transferred to Stalingrad. The heaviest losses of the Red Army during the retreat to the Don, the disorganization, and in fact the defeat of the armies of the southern flank, allowed the enemy to continue their offensive. But since part of the Red Army forces withdrew to Stalingrad, and the other retreated to the south, to the Caucasus, the German troops also began to move in two divergent directions - east and southeast. This led to an even greater dispersion of forces and put the Wehrmacht high command before the next choice of a priority direction. According to a number of German generals, it was at this moment that Hitler made a fatal mistake: he ordered to attack simultaneously in two

directions - to the Caucasus and Stalingrad. As a result, the German 4th Panzer Army was transferred from the Stalingrad direction to the Caucasus, and the 11th Army, the most experienced, with high morale, was generally sent to Leningrad. Hitler clearly overestimated the strength and capabilities of the Wehrmacht. The German troops, already scattered and weakened by long battles, were divided between two strategic directions, which largely predetermined the catastrophe of the Wehrmacht on the Volga that followed soon after.

Defense of Stalingrad. Preparations for the defense of Stalingrad began as early as October 1941, but after the successes of the Red Army in the winter campaign, these works were stopped. In summer

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In 1942, I had to again urgently start preparing defense lines on the far and near approaches to the city. The significance of Stalingrad was not limited to the symbolism of its name and the fact that it was a communications center on the Volga. Stalingrad remained the largest military-industrial center of the country. The Stalingrad Tractor Plant produced in early 1942 up to 50% of all T-34 tanks; tank engines, artillery tractors, shells, mines, and air bombs were also produced here. In the first half of 1942 alone, other factories in the city produced more than 1,500 T-60 tanks, 1,750 T-34 armored hulls, and 1,944 Il-2 attack aircraft armored hulls. The largest artillery factory in the country, Barrikady, produced thousands of artillery pieces. Thus, preventing the capture and destruction of the city became the most important task.

The direct cover of Stalingrad was to be provided by two armies of the Stalingrad Front - the 62nd Major General V.Ya. Kolpakchi and the 64th under the command of Lieutenant General tenant V.I. Chuikov, each of which covered a vast area of defense - 90 and 120 km, respectively. The front command (commander Marshal S.K. Timoshenko, from July 23 - Lieutenant General V.N. Gordov) believed that the Germans would strike the main blow from the south. However, the intentions of the enemy turned out to be different. The task originally assigned to the 6th Army of General F. Paulus was to ensure the offensive of the main forces into the Caucasus. However, the appearance of new reserves of the Red Army in the Stalingrad direction was regarded as a clear threat to the flank of the strike force, and Paulus was given the task of eliminating this threat by striking at Stalingrad. For this purpose, in addition to the existing divisions, six more new divisions, withdrawn from the Caucasian direction, were transferred to the 6th Army. But still, the army of Paulus was inferior to the Stalingrad Front, having 270 thousand soldiers and officers against 300 thousand Soviet ones; 3.4 thousand guns and mortars against 5 thousand and only 400 tanks against almost 1,000 Soviet ones. It seemed that with such a balance of forces it was simply impossible to attack.

¹ See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 349.

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But. But, as before, the enemy relied on the speed and secrecy of the maneuver of forces and superiority in the organization of the strike.

On July 23, Paulus struck, but not from the south, but from the north, in a sector where only one division of the 62nd Army provided a strip 42 km wide. Having quickly broken through the defenses, the enemy reached the Don on the morning of July 25, surrounding parts of two Soviet divisions and defeating their headquarters. General V.Ya. Kolpakchi tried to stop the German offensive with a counterattack by a tank corps subordinate to him, but this made no impression on the enemy, and the next day his motorized divisions found themselves in the rear of the 62nd Army. At the same time, another blow was dealt from the south by part of the forces. 6th Army, which posed a threat to the already complete encirclement of the 62nd Army.

On the evening of July 24, General A.M. Vasilevsky, despite the objections of the front commander, General V.N. Gordov, gave the order to launch a counterattack by the forces of two tank armies that had not yet completed their formation in the rear of the front. On July 25, the offensive was launched by the 1st Panzer Army with the support of part of the forces of the 4th Panzer. Then the main forces of the front, the 21st, 62nd and 64th armies, were to go on the offensive.

At the cost of losing over 300 tanks out of 550 tank armies. were able to stop the advance of the enemy, but no more. The threat of encirclement of the forces of the 62nd Army could not be removed. The front, on the other hand, lost its main striking force. The Chief of the General Staff and a representative of the Headquarters repeated with amazing accuracy the mistakes made three weeks earlier when the 5th Panzer Army of General A.I. Lizyukov near Voronezh. The failure of the counterattack provoked an angry reaction from Stalin. "The actions of the command of the Stalingrad Front are indignant at the Headquarters," the telephone message from Moscow noted. - At the front, the superiority in tanks is three times, absolute predominance in aviation. With the desire and skill, it was possible to break the enemy without a hitch. The Headquarters demands that in the coming days the defense line from Kletskaya to Kalmykovo be unconditionally restored, so that the enemy is pushed back behind the line

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R. Chir. If the Military Council of the Stalingrad Front is not capable of doing this, let them state it directly and honestly.

It was obvious that the presence of A.M. Vasilevsky did not give the desired results, while he was clearly lacking in his place in Moscow, at the head of the General Staff, where his staff experience could be much more useful. The already mentioned commissioner F.I. Bokov, who replaced the Chief of the General Staff, of course, was not in a position to really lead the "brain of the army."

Order "Not a step back!". The armies of the Stalingrad Front continued to retreat. It seemed that this retreat would be endless. Just these days, an order was received at the fronts for the native commissar of defense No. 227, better known as the order "Not a step back!". It was signed by I.V. Stalin on July 28, 1942. Historians usually mention this order in connection with the infamous penal battalions. Indeed, the order ordered the creation of penal battalions from among the middle, senior commanders and penal companies, formed from ordinary soldiers and junior commanders, "guilty of violating discipline due to cowardice or instability, and put them on more difficult sectors of the front in order to give them the opportunity to atone for their crimes against the Motherland with their blood. The same order provided for the creation of barrage detachments in the rear of unstable divisions, obliging them "in the event of panic and disorderly withdrawal of parts of the division, to shoot alarmists and cowards on the spot and thereby help honest division soldiers to fulfill their duty to the Motherland." Commanders and commissars of regiments and battalions who allowed unauthorized withdrawal without an order were subject to court martial.

But order No. 227 is still more remarkable than others. Being no more cruel than Order No. 270 of August 16, 1941, it contained two very important points. First of all, Stalin recognized the extreme severity of defeats at the front. Enumerating the colossal losses of the country "more than 70 million people, more than 80 million poods of grain per year and more than 10 million

lions tons of metal per year", Supreme Commander

b Cited. In: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 354.

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concluded: "We no longer have predominance over the Germans either in human reserves or in grain reserves. To retreat further means to ruin ourselves and at the same time ruin our Motherland. Recognition of the severity of the crisis and the severity of the consequences was accompanied by an unexpected appeal to the experience of the enemy: "After their winter retreat under the pressure of the Red Army, when discipline was shaken in the German troops, the Germans took some severe measures to restore discipline, which led to good results." Actually, it was the success of this experience that Stalin explained the need to create penal battalions and detachments.

And, finally, true to himself, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief also indicated the reasons for the defeats: "There is a lack of order and discipline in companies, battalions, regiments, divisions, in tank units, in air squadrons. This is now our main shortcoming. We must establish the strictest order and iron discipline in our army if we want to save the situation and defend the Motherland. .

In fact, Order No. 227 was of a program nature — it assessed the situation, identified the causes, and determined the necessary measures. Of course, one of the main causes of the summer catastrophe of 1942—the gross miscalculations and mistakes of Stalin himself and his entourage—was not named. Stalin continued to shift the responsibility to others. But, perhaps, the main thing that this order testified to was the realization that the reasons for the defeats of the Red Army lay in its organization and management. However, Stalin still believed that it was enough to give an order, backed up by the threat of cruel punishment, and the task would be solved, the enemy would be stopped. In those conditions, solutions of a completely different content were required, which, however, were quite obvious to professionals.

From the memoirs of Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky:

"Weakened in the winter and spring offensive operations, our troops could not detain the enemy and were forced to withdraw ... In addition, the enemy had greater mobility

1 Cited. Quoted from: The Great Patriotic War... S. 507.

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and dominance in the air, which the Headquarters did not take into account ... The mistake of the initial period of the war was repeated, when directives were issued that did not correspond to the situation, which only played into the hands of the enemy. The troops hastily advanced to meet him, not having time to concentrate, on the move, unorganized went into battle ... Everything was done differently from how we were taught military affairs in schools, academies, at military games and maneuvers, contrary to what was acquired by the experience of two previous wars.

In this case, the "Solomonic solution" was not required. "The enemy is known, we have lost the battle (this was also known) - it was only necessary to realistically calculate: when and where the forces capable of stopping the enemy and delivering a counterattack could be concentrated. In this particular situation, closer than on the Don River, we did not have time to do this. A natural solution suggested itself: the defeated troops to retreat, slowing down the enemy by using mobile defenses. And then in an organized way to meet him with fresh forces advanced from the reserve of the Stavka, at the turn of the Don River. Having drawn the main enemy forces into battle, it was necessary to carry out a counterattack on their flank.

The strict requirement "Not a step back!" rather hindered the implementation of this logical and self-evident professional solution. It was more in line with the ideas of war already mentioned by L.3. Mekhlis, who, according to K. Simonov, who knew him well, "under no circumstance, considered everyone who preferred a comfortable position a hundred meters from the enemy to an uncomfortable one fifty meters away, a coward. I considered everyone who wanted elementary safety

sieve troops from a possible failure - by an alarmist; He considered everyone who realistically assessed the strength of the enemy to be unsure of his own strength. Mehlis, for all. his personal readiness to give his life for the motherland, was a pronounced product of the atmosphere of 1937-1938. Stalin, in fact, also thought everything in the framework of the pre-war managerial model, while

1 Rokossovsky K.K. Decree. op. pp. 233-234. ? Simonov K. Decree. op. pp. 297-298.

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while it has long ceased to be effective in the conditions of modern highly maneuverable warfare.

The attitude of the Red Army to Stalin's new order turned out to be ambiguous. "Order No. 227 is one of the most powerful documents of the war years in terms of the depth of patriotic content, in terms of the degree of emotional intensity ...," Marshal A.M. Vasilevsky later read. - 'It was ordered to remove the commanders of the armies, the commanders of corps and divisions, who allowed the unauthorized withdrawal of troops ... I, like many other generals, saw some sharpness in the assessments of the order, but they were justified by a very severe and anxious time. In the order, we were primarily attracted by its social and moral content. He drew attention to himself by the severity of the truth ... "I. However, the attitude of ordinary soldiers and officers to this order was far from unambiguous.

From the reports of the Special Department of the NKVD of the Stalingrad Front about the statements of the personnel of the units regarding Order No. 227, August 1942: |

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"Senior Lieutenant Kompaniets: "... Comrade Stalin's order is fair and timely. I myself will now, regardless of faces, call cowards and alarmists to order. The mother will perish, we will perish ...>

Red Army soldier Naiman: "... If this order had been issued at the beginning of June, our division would not have ended up in the Stalingrad region, but would have fought hard for Ukraine ..."

Red Army soldier Andreev: "Whatever you want for our people

. write an order, follow it anyway, like the previous orders

oops, they won't. After all, other orders of the people's commissar also said that a merciless fight must be waged against cowards and alarmists, up to execution on the spot, but no measures were taken. The same will happen with this order. It will soon be forgotten."

Military doctor Olshanetsky: "... The order of the Headquarters is the last

1 Vasilevsky A.M. The work of a lifetime. Two books. Book. 1. - M.: Politiz-

dat, 1990, pp. 230-232. Here it is interesting to note that the most famous commanders of the war G.K. Zhukov, K.K. Rokossovsky and I.S. Konev left the publication of Order No. 227 and its impact on the troops without comment.

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a cry of despair when we are no longer able to resist the Germans. Anyway, nothing will come of this event ... "

Red Army soldier Kalinushkin: "... The order was issued for wrecking, it says -" do not retreat a single step, this is in order to destroy all people ... "!

But something else is also remarkable. Over time, the attitude of the front-line soldiers to this order has changed. So, the already mentioned participant of the Rzhev battle P.A. Mikhin, in his memoirs, cites a number of egregious examples of the unreasonable application of Order No. 227, which led to grave tragedies? But both the author of the memoirs and B.S. Gorbachevsky, who fought in the same 30th Army, agree that the order. No. 227 nevertheless "saved the country from defeat in the war with Germany"?. This apparent contradiction in assessments was due to the fact that the morale of the soldiers and officers of the Red Army, after the monstrous losses, numerous defeats, and mediocre actions of the command, was indeed extremely low, close to shock. Extreme measures were required to overcome this shock, sometimes simply by force to do one's duty. Over time, after the turning point in the war, cruelty and often - unjustified - began to seem necessary. |

And yet, despite the severity of the measures, the creation of fine bats and the actions of detachments, there was no immediate change in the morale of the army, the retreat of the Red Army continued. At the end of July and beginning of August, the command of the Stalingrad Front tried to launch a counterattack against the divisions of the advancing enemy, but, being poorly organized, this time it did not reach the goal. In response, General F. Paulus on the morning of August 7 delivered a blow to the 62nd and 1st Panzer Armies of the Stalingrad Front, which were defending the right bank of the Don in its bend. On the evening of August 10, four divisions of these armies were surrounded. The next day for worked until

1 The Stalingrad epic: Materials of the NKVD of the USSR ... S. 175-189. ? See: Mikhin P.A. Decree. op. P.45-50. 3 Ibid. S. 44; See also: Gorbachevsky B.S. Decree. op. S. 124.

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automatic pattern, the enemy dismembered them and began their successive destruction.

Stalin demanded from the front commander, General A.I. Eremenko to organize a breakthrough of the encirclement ring, again

still referring to the German experience: "the Germans never leave their units, surrounded by Soviet troops, and with all possible forces and means try to break through to them at all costs and save them. The Soviet command should have more comradely feelings for its encircled units than the German command... The Stavka considers it a matter of honor for the Stalingrad command to rescue the encircled units. The Stalingrad command now has sufficient forces and means to break through to its encircled divisions and withdraw them. But General Eremenko could not do anything. From the encirclement, only separate groups managed to break through. In total, the formations of the Paulus army captured about 57 thousand people prisoners, destroyed and captured more than 1,000 tanks and armored vehicles, up to 750 guns and almost 650 aircraft?.

This defeat in the bend of the Don had a depressing effect on the fighters and commanders of the Stalingrad Front. The Special Branches again noted a decline in discipline and morale.

From the memorandum of the Special Department of the NKVD of the Stalingrad Front, September 1942:

"During the hostilities, a number of facts were noted about manifestations of cowardice on the part of the commanding officer, as well as the rank and file.

For example:

1) August 23 this year the enemy, under the cover of aviation, broke through the defense line of the 4th and 166th [rifle] P[regiments], which began to retreat in disarray.

The commander of the 4th regiment, Major Yarov, and the military commissar, battalion commissar Sergeev, instead of organizing a planned withdrawal, abandoned the regiment and fled from the battlefield.

1 Cited. In: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 357. ? There. S. 356.

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Commander of the 116th [rifle] Regiment] Major Kozin, military commissar, battalion commissar Belikov and head. of the regiment headquarters, Captain Tishchenko also fled from the battlefield, and leave the regiment's KN

whether owls secret documents and the cash desk of the regiment.

2) August 15 this year the firing positions of the artillery regiment of the 22nd Fighter Brigade were bombarded by enemy aircraft.

The regiment commander, Major Chirkov, and the military commissar Petrov, having shown cowardice, fled from the battlefield. No one led the regiment.

Perhaps the only positive result of these days was that the enemy failed to achieve his main goal - to encircle and destroy the main forces of the Stalingrad Front, opening the road to the Volga. Gradually, the consequences of the erroneous decision of the command of the Wehrmacht to attack in two directions began to show - to the Caucasus and to the Volga. Already in the course of the battle, realizing that Stalingrad had become of key importance for the entire campaign in the south, Hitler transferred the 4th Panzer Army of General G. Hoth and the 8th Italian Army to Paulus. This powerful fist of 25 divisions was thrown at Stalingrad.

The command of the Red Army also directed its reserves to the Stalingrad direction. In early August, ten rifle divisions and a tank brigade were transferred from the Far East to Stalingrad. The Stalingrad Tractor Plant, which did not stop work for a day, sent 200 tanks to the front - that's almost three more brigades. On August 10, fighting began on the outskirts of the city. In this situation, Stalin decides to reorganize the control of forces in the Stalingrad direction. By order of the Headquarters, the South-Eastern and Stalingrad fronts were united under the command of Lieutenant General A.I. Eremenko. At the same time, the headquarters, which was at the disposal of the new commander, had only recently been formed from the army headquarters, and he lacked neither experience nor personnel. And this at a time when the subordinate headquarters of the Stalingrad Front was created on the basis of the headquarters of the former Southwestern Front, staffed by the most experienced staff

| Stalingrad epic: Materials of the NKVD of the USSR ... S. 211.

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by our officers. This decision of Stalin once again showed the underestimation of the role and importance of headquarters in modern war, so characteristic of him at that time, however, this feature was inherent not only to Stalin.

To "strengthen the command" in Stalingrad, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Soviet Union (6) G.M. Malenkov, Chief of the General Staff, General A.M. Vasilevsky, commander of the Red Army Air Force, General A.A. Novikov and the head of the Main Armored Directorate, General Ya.N. Fedorenko and a little later - the people's commissar of the tank industry V.A. Malyshev. But this time, the "Moscow landing" did not save the situation. The command and control of troops at the front left much to be desired.

From the diary of the people's commissar of the tank industry V.A. Malysheva:

"Artillerymen are especially good at fighting. Worse - tankers. Today, close, a kilometer away, I observed the work of our tankers. The rod is directly on the mines and anti-tank weapons of the enemy. They die in vain. In 20-30 minutes the Germans knocked out and burned about 15 of our T-34s, and we only 2 German] tanks ...

For 20 days I closely observed the work of the front headquarters. Our staff service is poorly organized. There is no clarity and organization (much weaker than in good factories), a lot of goofiness. Staff members are poorly cultured and developed, and many cannot link dozens of events and the constantly changing situation at the front into any system or see behind these, at first glance, disparate events, the enemy's plan (there is, of course, a general army. And the task of the headquarters is possible quickly, at the very beginning, unravel this plan). Instead, they chase after trifles, rack their brains over petty matters (and at this time, the junior employees of the headquarters, who must deal with smaller matters and process material for senior bosses, are idle, sleeping, talking) ”-.

1 Two days before the business trip to Stalingrad, V.A. Malyshev was relieved of his post as People's Commissar.

? Malyshev V.A. "A dozen years will pass, and these meetings cannot be restored in memory" // Source, 1997. No. 5. S. 119.

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On August 23, the tank units of the Paulus army broke through the defenses at the junction of the 4th Panzer and 62nd Armies with an unexpected blow and, having passed through the rear of the army for about 60 km, reached the Volga north of Stalingrad. To the south of the city, the defenses of the South-Eastern Front were broken through, and the enemy approached directly to the city.

The breakthrough of tank divisions to the Volga was accompanied by a massive raid by the entire 4th enemy air fleet on Stalingrad. Under a hail of high-explosive and incendiary bombs, the city blazed, turning into one giant bonfire. The water supply was out of order, the power supply and telephone communications were cut off. There was no one to put out the fires. Massive Luftwaffe raids continued until the end of the month. The city turned into a heap of smoking ruins. The fate of the inhabitants of the city and the refugees turned out to be dramatic. Until the very last moment, the city leadership feared accusations of spreading panic and did not even raise the issue of mass evacuation. By the beginning of the war, almost half a million people lived in the city, in addition, by May 1942, tens of thousands of evacuees and refugees arrived in the city. Before the start of the bombing, about 100 thousand people left the city. More than 400,000 people who remained in the city found themselves in the combat zone, abandoned by the city authorities and left to their own devices. By the day of the liberation of Stalingrad in February 1943, 32,181 people remained alive.

In September, fighting began on the near approaches to the city. The 6th Army of General F. Paulus from the north and the 4th Tank Army of General G. Goth from the south, moving along the Volga, tried to encircle the formations of the 62nd Army of General V.I. Chuikov. In October, the fighting reached its highest point. Opponents threw more and more reserves into battle. So, during the fighting on the distant and

near the approaches to the city, the number of formations of both the Red Army and the Wehrmacht more than doubled. Stalingrad

`turned into the monstrous Moloch, devouring tens of thousands of human lives, a huge amount of military equipment. The situation was considered normal when, in three to five days, out of 10-12 thousand people, a fresh, newly arrived division remained

1 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941--1945. Book 1. S. 364.

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only 1.5-2 thousand, and in a couple of days - 800-1,000 people
century.

The most important result of this "competition in the destruction of reserves" was that the enemy was forced to spend his already dwindling reserves, depriving himself of the prospect of achieving decisive success. Both from a tactical and operational point of view, the decision to throw into the urban battle the shock tank divisions of Paulus and Hoth was a fatal mistake of the Wehrmacht command. The pride and main striking power of the Wehrmacht, its armored wedges, brought down on Stalingrad, were literally bogged down in ruins. The ruined city swallowed them up.

From the memoirs of an officer of the 14th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht
R. Grams:

"It was a terrible, exhausting struggle on the ground and underground, in ruins and basements, in the ditches of a big city, in its industrial quarters ... Tanks climbed over mountains of garbage and debris, grinding, making their way through monstrosly destroyed factory floors, shooting at close range along the fallen streets and cramped factory yards. Another armored colossus suddenly shook and fell apart under the roar of a detonating enemy mine...

Farther on was the Volga bank, as deep as a bottomless gorge, abruptly cutting off to the river, here the most fierce battles flared up ... And on the opposite low wooded bank of the river it was impossible to see the enemy, but he was there, he was firing artillery fire from there, and every night, hundreds of his boats carried reinforcements across the wide stream to the ruins of Stalingrad, and it all started again: hurricane fire, dive bombers, smoke and fumes that blocked the sun for hours. But the situation remained almost unchanged, and the combat effectiveness of our troops was melting like butter in the sun.

The fighting has lost its former pace and scope. The German army was hopelessly losing its main advantage - mobility and maneuver. In November, a last attempt was made to capture the city. At the cost of bringing the last reserves into battle

1 Cited. by: Beshanov V.V. Decree. op. S. 561.

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The 6th Army managed to break through to the Volga, but only in a section 500-600 meters wide, and this proved to be the last success. The fighting took on a hopelessly protracted and positional character. Stalingrad survived.

The losses of the Red Army during the defense of Stalingrad turned out to be colossal. The fronts operating on this direction lost 643,842 people during the defense (without return losses amounted to 323,856 soldiers and officers), 1,426 tanks, 12,137 guns and mortars, 2,063 combat aircraft. And although the losses of the enemy this time turned out to be much smaller, but their significance turned out to be much more significant. The main thing was that the Wehrmacht morally broke down in Stalingrad. There was an effect of the battle of Borodino, in which, according to General A.P. Yermolov, "the French army was crushed against the Russian army." There, in the ruins of Stalingrad, the Wehrmacht was faced with a task that it could not solve. And if near Moscow everything could be attributed to the unexpected Russian winter, General Moroz, then here it became obvious that the German army had reached the limit of what was possible.

From the memoirs of an officer of the German army G. Welz - a participant in the battles in Stalingrad: |

"So, the end! Everything turned out to be useless. I don't understand where the Russians still get their strength from. It's just unbelievable. An intense rage seizes me. For the first time in the entire war, I am faced with a task that simply cannot be solved. If shop No. 4 is attacked by small assault groups, there is not enough strength to overcome all the obstacles, break through into the depths and finally crush the entire cleverly built defense. If attacked with larger forces, they cannot turn around in the narrow space of the workshop and are simply a more convenient target, they are destroyed in parts.

So, workshop number 4 cannot be taken by direct attack! At least not with our powers. The realization of this fact shocks me. After all, I have not had to worry about this for all the campaigns.

`We broke through stable fronts, fortified lines

1 See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 279, 484.

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rons, overcame engineered water barriers - rivers and canals, took well-equipped pillboxes and pockets of resistance, captured cities and villages. We always had enough ammunition, oil, gasoline, explosives, smoke bombs, steel, iron, non-ferrous metals and rubber. And here,

right in front of the Volga, some kind of factory that we are unable to take! For me, this is a sobering blow: I saw how weak we are.

At the same time, the opposite process was taking place in the Red Army troops, who stopped the victorious armies of the Wehrmacht on the Volga. The peculiarity of the situation in Stalingrad lay in the fact that the previously existing rigid control system "from top to bottom" had collapsed, and constant control of battalions and companies became impossible. As a result, the commanders of platoons, companies, battalions for a long time did not have any orders from above and received a kind of previously unseen freedom. Lieutenants, and often sergeants and privates, themselves had to make decisions on which their lives and the lives of their comrades depended. In the conditions of street battles waged by small groups - squads and platoons, the decisive role began to be played by the individual qualities of each soldier, his ability to "learn the science of war", his desire to win. It was then that the real natural qualities of the Russian soldier and, above all, his famous intelligence, ingenuity, resourcefulness, and not just his long-suffering and unpretentiousness, made themselves felt.

From the memoirs of a participant in the defense of Stalingrad:

"It was necessary to constantly come up with something new. And this was done in the army with enthusiasm, even with passion, by many people - from senior commanders and staff officers to ordinary soldiers. The people's sense of personal responsibility for the result of the battle became aggravated, initiative developed, the ability to dare, the soldiers learned to think like a commander.

"Each attack required its own decision and had little to do with

1 Welz G. Soldiers who were betrayed: notes of a former Wehrmacht officer. - Smolensk: "Rusich", 1999. S. 89-90.

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given previous. Naturally, in such peculiar conditions, the role of squad commanders, platoon and company commanders increased immeasurably. Often they had to act independently, sometimes even in isolation from other units. Therefore, initiative, ingenuity and resourcefulness acquired more and more importance!

Very quickly, the defenders of the city learned to create a stable defense - to use the conditions of the terrain, create barriers, camouflage, covertly maneuver and suddenly counterattack, cut off enemy infantry with fire and destroy his tanks. It was also there in Stalingrad that the tactics of combat in the city were born, the basis of which was the actions of small assault groups, consisting of experienced and determined fighters equipped with automatic weapons, grenades, explosives, fire

non-throwers.

Although small, but the victories during the defense of the city, when it was possible to defend a separate house, capture the station building, defeat the enemy company - all these real successes instilled confidence in the soldiers in themselves, in their weapons, their commanders. These small victories, better than any cruel orders, restored discipline, morale and fighting efficiency of the troops. A turning point began in the mood of the troops. As the writer Viktor Nekrasov, a participant in the Battle of Stalingrad, later noted: "the battle for Stalingrad was a triumph and the greatest glory of the Russian infantry."

On the outskirts of the Caucasus. While the army of Paulus, without being safely stuck in the ruins of Stalingrad, tried to break through this Volga, Army Group A, consisting of 40 divisions, incl. four tank and three motorized, capturing Rostov - the "gates of the Caucasus", rushed to the cherished oil-bearing regions. Its task was to encircle and destroy the Soviet troops south of Rostov, and then, divided into two groups, move around the Main Caucasian Range from the west and east. The western group was supposed to go to the coast of the Black Sea and capture Novorossiysk and Tuapse. Eastern should have

1 Cited. by: Beshanov V.V. Decree. op. S. 551.

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move southeast in a general direction towards Baku. Dizzying prospects opened before Hitler. way to Iran and Iraq, atam was already "within reach" of British India.

The Caucasus was at that time the most important economic region of the country, where 86.5% of oil, 65% of gas, and 56.5% of manganese ore were mined. The approaches to the Caucasus were to be defended by the troops of the Southern (commander - Lieutenant General R.Ya. Malinovsky) and North Caucasian (commander - Marshal S.M. Budyonny) fronts. The first included barmy, numbering only 112 thousand people, 2,160 guns and mortars, 121 tanks?. The North Caucasian front included formations of two armies and two corps - about 216 thousand people. The coastal flank of the front was supported by the Black Sea Fleet and the Azov Flotilla. In general, there were clearly not enough forces for a reliable and lasting defense, moreover, the troops of the Southern Front were seriously weakened by heavy losses during the retreat. It took time to put the armies in order and organize the defense, since the defensive lines were not prepared in advance. But the enemy did not wait. On July 25, the tank divisions of the 1st and 4th armies broke through the shaky defenses of the Southern Front and went to the rear of its armies.

On July 27, General R.Ya. Malinovsky, under his own responsibility, ordered the troops to be withdrawn to the border of the Manych and Kagalnik rivers. But Stalin reacted to this quickly and harshly. On July 28, Malinovsky was removed from his post, and in order No. 227, he was

on the same day, the troops of his front were mentioned as

. covering "their banners with shame." The armies of the Southern Front were united with the troops of the North Caucasian Front under the general command of S.M. Budyonny. Three days before, assessing the situation in the Caucasian direction, Budyonny proposed to withdraw troops beyond the border of the Kuban and Terek rivers, where, in his opinion, it was quite possible to stop the enemy. According to the marshal, in conditions where the enemy retained superiority in mobility, it was possible to stop him

1 See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 369. ? See: Beshanov V.V. Decree. op. S. 366.

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only where nature itself deprived the Germans of the possibility of wide maneuver. But in Moscow they did not listen to his opinion,

moreover, Budyonny was given the task of not only

restore control of the troops and stop the offensive

the enemy, but neither more nor less than defeat the divisions of Kleist

and Gotha and throw them back over the Don. Stalin is still

lived his former tactics of "active defense" - ism

poke the enemy, regardless of any of their own

losses.

As before, the orders of the Headquarters did not correspond at all to the situation and the real capabilities of the troops. These days, through the Don steppes in clouds of dust, under the scorching summer sun, innumerable crowds of refugees moved, herds of cattle driven to the rear, everything that could move - cars, tractors, wagons, carriages - rode. In this completely uncontrollable flow, separate units and entire formations were lost, the headquarters could not find their troops, the rear services, completely mixed up, were not able to establish elementary supplies. On the sides of the roads stood abandoned due to lack of fuel equipment. The troops, left without artillery and tanks, experienced an acute shortage of the most necessary - grenades, ammunition, food, water. And, most importantly, there was absolutely no communication - dozens of messengers rushed across the steppe, looking for the lost units and headquarters of formations. German aviation, without encountering any opposition, attacked the retreating columns of refugees and units of the Red Army with virtually impunity, exacerbating the confusion even more. The troops needed time to put in order and restore combat readiness. But they didn't have that time. To get a respite, it was necessary to break away from the enemy and gain a foothold on the prepared line of defense. He maintained his superiority in mobility and most importantly -

controllability, and literally "hung on the tail" of the retreating troops.

Nevertheless, the new front commander set the troops the task of starting the offensive on July 30. Marshal Budyonny was about to strike at Bataysk, I was advancing on the flank of the German

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our grouping with the forces of the 18th Army and the cavalry corps. sa, but on July 29 the Germans struck first. The divisions of the 1st Panzer Army of E. Kleist, rapidly crossing the river. Ma nych, surrounded the troops of the 37th and 12th armies. With great difficulty, their formations still managed to break out of the ring, but only in order to get into a new encirclement of the same German divisions west of Salsk. The German tank units simply caught up with the retreating troops and closed another ring. This time it was not possible to get out of the encirclement in an organized manner, the surviving small groups went to the foothills of the Caucasus. German troops continued their rapid advance, bypassing the Caucasus Range from the east and west. On August 5, Kleist's formations took Stavropol, and the next day - Armavir. On August 9, the 1st Panzer Army occupied Maikop, on the same day, the advanced units of General E. Kleist broke into Pyatigorsk. On August 12, the Germans took over Krasnodar. Marshal Budyonny could not stop the enemy's advance. The Wehrmacht went to the foothills of Kav

kaza.

During the fighting on the outskirts of the Caucasus, all the same shortcomings inherent in the troops of the Red Army appeared, as in the Stalingrad and other directions. The Stavka - both Stalin and the General Staff - often did not want to take into account the real state of affairs and the capabilities of the troops, believing that it was enough just to "push" the troops, to force the commander to act more decisively. The commanders of the fronts and armies, the commanders of divisions, in addition to the fact that they often did not yet have experience in command and control of troops, sometimes simply ignored the relevant orders and demands of common sense. So, the commander of the 46th Army, Major General V.F. Sergatskov received an order back in July to organize the defense of the passes leading to Kutaisi and Sukhumi, but did not take any appropriate measures, relying on the impregnability of the local

1 The defeat of the North Caucasian Front at the end of the summer of 1942 put an end to the military activities of Marshal Budyonny. In September, he was relieved of his post as front commander. From January 1943 until the end of the war, S.M. Budyonny remained commander of the Red Ar cavalry

missions.

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sti. The events that followed soon revealed the whole difference in the preparation of the German and Soviet commands for the war in

mountains

From the memoirs of the commander of the alpinist detachment A.M. Gusev:

"The German command intended to advance not only across open spaces, but also to deliver several blows through the passes of the Main Caucasian Range. For this purpose, the professionally highly trained 49th Mountain Infantry Corps under the command of General Rudolf Konrad was included in Army Group A. The corps included the 1st mountain rifle division "Edelweiss" of General Lanz... The mountain infantry formations were equipped with alpinists and residents of the mountainous regions of Germany... Well-trained, fully manned, provided with special alpinist equipment formations went to the mountains...

Mountain rifle units have always existed in the Red Army... The soldiers wore panama caps instead of caps. That, in essence, is everything that distinguished them from ordinary rifle formations. Special mountain training in these parts was not carried out. They had neither special mountain equipment nor uniforms. The diet was also normal. Soldiers and commanders wore boots or boots with windings, ordinary trousers, overcoats... |

Why our troops were so weakly trained for mountain warfare, I do not presume to explain. Perhaps some people thought that a war in the mountains was unlikely for our country. Even before the war, we, mountain climbers, had repeatedly applied to the Department of Mountain, Ski and Physical Training of the Red Army with a proposal to use our experience for mountain training of troops. But they often heard in response: "We can't fight on Elbrus ..."!.

Already on the first day of the offensive of part of the 49th corps, the Lee breakthrough was blocked by barriers in the passes, as a result of which there was a threat to Sukhumi and the enemy's exit to the coast. On August 21, a specially trained group of climbers from the Edelweiss division

hoisted two Nazi flags on top of Elbrus?

' Gusev A. M. Elbrus on fire. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1980. S. 11-12, 47, 53.

? See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 380.

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than not for long. They were soon removed on purpose. by a group of Soviet climbers.

The rapid breakthrough of the German rangers through the passes explained. blatant ignorance of the actions of the front command and the 46th Army. The few available mountain units were on the coast or covered the Turkish border, while

while the mountain passes were covered by rare companies of ordinary rifle battalions, whose commanders did not even have the necessary maps and did not know the terrain itself.

From the memoirs of Marshal A.A. Grechko:

"There was some kind of carelessness, generated, obviously, by disbelief in the ability of German troops, no matter how significant, to infiltrate through the high mountain passes into Transcaucasia. When, on August 10, the Headquarters expressed doubts about the reliability of the report of the front headquarters on the state of defense at the passes and raised specific questions, the front headquarters could not answer them, since it did not have accurate data on which passes were covered and by what forces, which of them were prepared for undermining .

... In view of the fact that most of the commanders of the troops of the front had no experience of military operations in the mountains, the defense and the system of its fire were organized, as a rule, only directly on the pass, instead of taking out fire weapons to the near and far approaches to it . :

The defense was not circular. A number of directions, which allowed the approach to the passes not only of individual groups, but also of entire enemy units, were not discovered and were not defended by anyone. This was a consequence of the fact that a detailed reconnaissance of the areas adjacent to the passes was not carried out. Moreover, only observation was left on the positions, and the garrisons themselves were located on the southern slopes of the ridge, in settlements and camps, sometimes 5-20 km away from the passes.

The connection between the army headquarters and the troops was established in such a way that they learned about the enemy's breakthrough through the passes

1 Cited. by: Beshanov V.V. Decree. op. pp. 422-423.

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only after two (!) days. The unsuccessful actions of the 46th Army in covering the passes were also explained by the fact that most of the formations of the Transcaucasian Front at that time covered the Black Sea coast. Front Commander General of the Army I.V. Tyulenev, like General F.I. Kuznetsov in the Crimea in the autumn of 1941, most of all feared German landings from the sea, although he had at his disposal the entire Black Sea Fleet and the Azov military flotilla. The entire "fleet" of the enemy at that time was represented only by small ships - torpedo boats, minesweepers and landing barges.

From the memoirs of Army General I.V. Tyuleneva:

"The situation was worse for us in the central sector of the Transcaucasian Front. Well-armed alpine

detachments of the Nazis occupied the passes ... and in some places broke through to their southern slopes ... There was a threat of an enemy breakthrough to the sea through high mountain passes. |

It should be said that this was a considerable part of the fault of the command and staff of the Transcaucasian Front, who recklessly decided that the passes themselves were inaccessible to the enemy. Some of us considered the main task of the front troops to be the defense of the Black Sea coast, where the main forces of the 46th Army were deployed.

Only the intervention of the Headquarters corrected our mistake. On instructions from Moscow, we developed a new plan for the defense of the passes of the Main Caucasian Range. The defense of the passes was divided into sectors headed by experienced commanders and staffs!

In September-October, the main efforts of the enemy were made in the eastern foothills of the Caucasus, trying to break through into the Transcaucasus. At the end of October, the Germans managed to capture Nalchik and reach Ordzhonikidze. But on the outskirts of the city, the 9th Army delivered a strong counterattack against formations of the enemy's 1st Panzer Army and forced it to retreat.

The offensive of the German troops in the western part of the Main Caucasian Range continued until mid-December. Pro-

' Tyulenev I. V. Through three wars. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1972. S. 173.

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The enemy managed to cross the Kerch Strait, despite the absolute superiority of the Black Sea Fleet and the Azov Flotilla in the ship composition, to capture the Gaman Peninsula and reach Novorossiysk. But in the city itself, the Germans received a "second Stalingrad." The enemy was able to capture only half of the city. Parts of the 47th Army, Major General G.P. Kotova and the sailors of the Black Sea Fleet in fierce street fighting stopped the advance of the 17th German Army. In November, the enemy made a last attempt to break through to the Black Sea coast in the Tuapse region, but parts of the 18th Army, Major General A.A. Grechko stopped this advance with counterattacks. This ended the German offensive in the Caucasus.

In July-December 1942, the German troops of Army Group A, operating on the broadest front of 320-1000 km, managed to achieve impressive successes. Having crossed the Don and the Kerch Strait, they advanced 400-800 km and reached the western spurs of the Main Caucasian Range. A real threat arose for the enemy to reach the Black Sea coast in the Tuapse region and break through to the oil fields of Grozny. The troops of the North Caucasian and Transcaucasian Fronts, the Black Sea Fleet and the Azov Flotilla, defending the Caucasus, suffered heavy losses. Their total number for the entire period of the fighting amounted to 603,200 soldiers and officers, of which almost a third -

192,791 people - irretrievable losses, the troops lost 990 tanks, 5,049 guns and mortars, 644 aircraft. The losses of non-German troops exceeded 100 thousand killed and wounded?.

The failure of the German offensive in the Caucasus, together with the failure of the army of F. Paulus near Stalingrad, meant the failure of the plan for the entire summer campaign, which created the prerequisites for a general crisis on the Eastern Front. The Wehrmacht approached the limit of its capabilities. Moreover, the operational successes of the summer of 1942, in the complete absence of strategic results, led to the fact that the front line in the southern direction increased from 500 km in May 1942 to 2,300 km in December. Success turned into a threat

1 See: Russia and the USSR: in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 280, 485. ? See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1. S. 382.

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defeat. If the crisis of the winter of 1941 near Moscow showed that the German army was not capable of attacking in three directions at the same time, now doubts arose about the Wehrmacht's ability to conduct a successful offensive in at least one strategic direction. The impossibility of continuing the offensive meant the need to go over to the defensive. On October 14, 1942, the Wehrmacht high command issued an order to go over to the defensive along the entire Eastern Front, with the exception of narrow sections near Stalingrad, Nalchik and Tuapse. But this, in turn, called into question the main goal of the war - the destruction of the Soviet Union. Thus, the German strategy of war on the Eastern Front came to a dead end.

ALL FOR THE FRONT!

1942 became one of the most difficult periods of the war not only for the soldiers and officers of the Red Army, but also for all Soviet people in the rear. The situation in the country's economy turned out to be critical. The indicators of the average monthly production of metal and machine tools, coal mining, and electricity production fell two to four times compared with the pre-war level. Iron smelting and the production of metal-cutting machines were reduced by five times. As a result of the capture by the enemy of the western regions of the USSR, 77% of the capacities for the production of sulfuric acid, 70% of plastics, and 50% of ammonia were lost. The production of gunpowder and explosives was under threat. By the beginning of 1942, non-ferrous metal rolling had decreased. compared with the pre-war level by 430 (!) times! And without non-ferrous metals - aluminum, copper, nickel, lead, tin, molybdenum - the production of the main types of weapons was simply impossible. In fact, it was in the rear that the question was decided whether or not the Red Army would be able to continue the fight at the front.

But nevertheless, with incredible efforts, the general decline in industrial production in the main sectors of the Soviet economy was managed to stop in the spring of 1942. Moreover, it began to

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See: Great Patriotic... S. 400.

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gradual increase in production volumes. This turning point was made possible thanks to the total mobilization of the forces of the entire country. In the tragic months of 1941-1942. The Soviet system has demonstrated its main advantage - the ability to quickly, centrally and universally mobilize forces to solve national problems.

In the second half of 1942, as compared with the first half, the production of steel increased by 4.3%, electricity by 6.3%, machine tools by 84.9%. The development of the economic potential in the east of the country played the most important role in this. As a result of the relocation of productive forces to the east and the rapid increase in the scale of industrial construction there, the economic regions east of the Volga became the main industrial base of the country. By the end of 1942, 1,200 evacuated enterprises and 850 new factories, mines, power plants, blast and open-hearth furnaces, and rolling mills were operating in the east. The proportion of military industry enterprises in the eastern regions increased from 18.5% in June 1941 to 76% in June 1942. Compared to 1940, gross industrial output in the Urals in 1942 increased 2.8 times, Western Siberia - 2.4 times, in Eastern

'exact Siberia - 1.4 times. As a result, the industry of the East in 1942 provided 97.4% of iron smelting, 89.1% of steel, and 90.2% of rolled products.

This victory in the rear, comparable in scale to that of Stalingrad, was made possible by a number of measures. Among them, it should be noted, first of all, the further mobilization of society's resources. On February 13, 1942, the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council announced the mobilization of the entire able-bodied population for work at the place of residence in production and construction, primarily in the defense, metallurgical and fuel industries. Then the effect of this Decree was extended to the rural able-bodied population. The state made up for the acute shortage of workers by enlisting women in production on a massive scale. In the second half of 1942, about 500 thousand households came to production

1 See: Great Patriotic... S. 398.

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sk. Women filled jobs in almost all types of industries. Thus, the proportion of women among steam engine drivers increased from 6% at the beginning of 1941 to 33% at the end.

1942, compressor drivers from 27 to 44, steam boiler stokers from bdo 27, metal turners from 16 to 33, metal welders from 17 to 31, locksmiths from 3.9 to 12, drivers from 3, 5 to 19 loaders — from 17% to 40%. But even the mass recruitment of women could not make up for the shortage of workers. The teenagers came to work. By the end of 1942, the number of workers and employees under the age of 18 reached 15% against 6% in 1939.

“From a letter from a young factory worker:

“At 6 o'clock in the morning they get out of bed and, wrapped in their father's padded jacket, rush – both in bitter frost and in a terrible blizzard, knee-deep in snow, in rain and autumn mud – to a distant factory to stand at the most difficult mill. Looking at him [the teenager], it is hard to believe that he is 14-15 years old. He holds out two drawers to reach the machine spindle; leans on the handle with his whole body to change the speed. But you should see how it works! With all his being, he seems to merge with the car and overtake it. He is tired, very tired. But has anyone seen his tears? And he cannot work more quietly: after all, his brother and father smash the enemy with his shells. This is not heroism, this is the everyday life of our rear.

By the end of 1942, in the most important branches of the defense industry, the proportion of adolescents and women among the workers reached 59-69%, in light industry enterprises 82-84% of all workers. The retired representatives of the old workers' guard also returned to the machines. By the end of 1942, the number of workers and employees over the age of 50 had risen from 9 to 12%².

Actually, it is for them - women, the elderly and adolescents -

To whom did the Soviet country owe this great victory in

1 Cited. by: Telpukhovskiy V.B. Heroism of the working class / War and society 1941-1945: In 2 books. Rep. ed. G.N. Sevostyanov. - M.: Nauka, 2004. Book. 2. 12.

2 Ibid.

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economic front of the war with Nazi Germany. As at Stalingrad, this victory was extremely difficult. This. It is hard to imagine the actual conditions in which the Soviet people found themselves at that difficult time. During the heavy and long work, the food of the workers was very poor. Shortly after the start of the war, between July and October 1941, the provision of an increasing part of the population took place on a card basis. The entire population was divided into four categories - workers, employees, dependents and children under 12 years old. At the same time, the most wealthy were workers and employees of defense, coal, oil, chemical enterprises.

industry, as well as builders and transport workers who received food in the first, higher category - they were supposed to have from 800 g to 1-1.2 kg of bread per day. The second category included employees and workers in other branches of the national economy, who received an average of 500 grams of bread. In addition to bread, industrial workers received monthly 1.8-2.0 kg of meat or fish, 400-600 g of fat, 600-800 g of sugar, 1.2-1.5 kg of cereals and pasta. The dependents received a total of 500 g of meat, 200 g of fat, and 600 g of cereals and pasta per month. Children under the age of one year were provided with special food from dairy kitchens, children in nurseries and kindergartens received a full ration of food, sugar and meat were additionally allocated to them. Breakfasts for students were introduced in schools in all cities and workers' settlements. In 1942, 4 million schoolchildren received breakfast. All in all, by the end of 1942, almost a third of the total pre-war population of the country was on the state supply - almost 61.8 million people.

"But there was also a special category, the food of which was provided on the basis of other norms. In November 1941, by a secret decision of the Moscow City Council, canteens with a contingent of no more than 100 people each for food without cards were created in each district of the city. 3 kg of meat, 2 kg of sausage, 1 kg of ham, 1.5 kg of fresh sturgeon or stellate sturgeon, 0.5 kg of caviar, 1 kg of cheese, 1 kg of

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vegetable oil, 1.5 kg of sugar, the required amount of bread, vegetables, dry fruits. ,

The growth of military production became possible due to a sharp reduction in the production of goods for the population. The consequence of this was the reduction of commodity funds for retail trade. Thus, in 1942 funds for textiles decreased by 11-12 times compared with pre-war times, for leather shoes - by 1 times, for soap - 4.4 times, for kerosene - 6.5 times, for matches - 8 times. ?. The most necessary items began to be distributed not through trade, but by cards. The maximum annual norm per person provided for no more than 6 m of cotton (linen) fabrics, 3 m of woolen fabrics and 1 pair of shoes. But even according to these standards, in 1942 the needs were met by no more than 25% °.

The hardships of wartime were exacerbated by a shortage of housing, made incredibly acute by the mass evacuation. By February 1942, about 6 million migrants settled in 40 regions and autonomous republics of the RSFSR alone. As a result, millions of people lived in barracks, dormitories, unsuitable office premises, even in tents and dugouts. The situation has become common when one worker living in a hostel has 1.3-2.2 sq. m. of living space di. Moreover, most of the workers were forced to huddle in dugouts and barracks.

From the memorandum of the chairman of the trade union committee of the tank factory

yes to the Ural Central Committee of the trade union of workers of the tractor and tank industry in 1942:

"8,500 people huddle in dugouts, and 12,500 tank builders huddle in unimproved frame barracks. In winter, the walls of the barns freeze through due to the settling of the backfill. In settlements there are only six taps for every 15,000 people. Kindergartens and nurseries, clinics, a club, a rest home are not connected to the sewer network. There are not enough bedside tables in the hostels,

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t See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 4. S. 100.

? There. Book 1. S. 402.

3 Ibid. Book 4. S. 101.

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stools, hangers, iron beds, bed linen, blankets. Tanks don't always have boiling water. There are few red corners. And just a little: hairdressers, baths, sewing and shoe shops.

The year 1942 was also very difficult for the collective farm peasantry. The country's agriculture, like industry, suffered heavy losses in the first year of the war. By the end of 1941, the agricultural machine park had decreased in comparison with the pre-war level by 242,000 tractors, 61,000 combines, and 162,000 motor vehicles. The possibilities of the collective farms were sharply reduced due to the massive mobilization of equipment into the Red Army. The trials of the war quickly revealed the low efficiency of the collective farm system of production, its main indicators—yields, livestock productivity—turned out to be lower than the prewar level, significantly inferior to the indicators of the peasant economy in Russia during the First World War and the indicators of agriculture of the main participants in the Second World War, including Germany. .

Under these conditions, the Soviet state took the usual path of increasing administrative pressure. In November 1941, political departments were created as part of the machine and tractor stations (MTS) in the villages. The main tasks of the political departments of the MTS were "to increase political work both among the workers and employees of the MTS and state farms, and among members of the collective farms, to introduce discipline and order in all the work of the MTS, state farms and collective farms to ensure the timely implementation of their plans." In addition, the political departments were charged with the duty to "increase revolutionary vigilance", "expose the enemy actions" of the former kulaks, the repressed and other "saboteurs". By administrative measures, however, the authorities tried to increase the efficiency of the collective farms. In April 1942, by a decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, the established minimum workdays for collective farmers were increased by almost one and a half times, for the first time it was extended to teenagers 12-16 years old. According to the decree, it was necessary to produce at least 100-150 workdays annually, depending on

1 See: Great Patriotic... S. 106.

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wages from the district instead of 60-80 under the conditions of 1939. For adolescents 12-16 years old, the mandatory minimum was at least 50 workdays a year. Collective farmers who did not work out the established norm were to be expelled from the agricultural arts or deprived of their personal plots. They should have been brought to justice and punished with corrective labor for up to 6 months.'

At the same time, no more than 20% of the grain from the gross harvest of collective farms was allocated to collective farmers to pay for workdays. The payment in kind for a workday has decreased by two or three times. In terms of one person, there were about 200 g of grain and 100 g of potatoes per day. The produce of the collective farm came to the disposal of the state practically free of charge, since procurement prices remained at the pre-war level: 7-8 kopecks per 1 kg of grain, 3 kopecks per 1 kg of potatoes. In 1942, peasant families were forced to supplement their "daily ration" with nettles, sorrel, quinoa, bran, cake, and acorns.

1942 turned out to be the most difficult year for the peasantry and

'cause of the lowest technical equipment of the village during the war years. This year, agriculture received 100 times less agricultural machinery than in 1940. Only 400 tractors were delivered to the machine and tractor stations (MTS) of the whole country, but new motor vehicles, combines, threshers, and seeders were not actually delivered. At the same time, the number of horses on collective farms decreased by almost 8 million compared to 1940. As a result, women had to become the main draft force for the period of sowing work, who had to harness the plows in the most direct sense in order to plow and then harrow earth. In 1942, the total sown area decreased by 42% in comparison with 1940. The yield of the main crops fell by 1.5-2 times. The amount of bread received decreased by 72%².

It is not surprising that in this situation the collective farms could not

fully provide food for the urban population.

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: See: Vyltsan M.A., Kondrashin V.V. Patriotism of the peasantry / War and society, 1941-1945 ... Book. 2.C. 55.

. See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S.417-418.

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The government had to issue a decree already in April 1942. Decree on the development of gardening and personal subsidiary farms of workers and employees, later these farms were exempted from paying agricultural tax. By the end of 1942, about one third of the entire urban population was employed in this activity. The development of horticulture significantly alleviated the shortage of food.

An additional means of mobilizing the already overstretched resources of society was an increase in the tax burden. In January 1942, a war tax was introduced to fund defense spending. This tax was imposed on citizens of pre-retirement age, including the commanders of the army and navy units, who did not participate in hostilities. The proceeds from this tax exceeded all previously levied tax payments. In the spring of 1942, payments of monetary compensation for holidays canceled during the war for all categories of the population were stopped. All these measures, caused by the difficult economic situation in the country, placed a new burden on the shoulders of the working people. During the war years, the state made extensive use of such a form of attracting additional funds as a subscription to war loans and the distribution of cash lotteries.

Poor food, lack of housing and essentials, combined with long working hours and an extraordinary tax burden undermined people's health and had a negative impact on the health of future generations. But even in these emergency conditions, the Soviet people managed to show their best qualities, among which the most impressive was their high sacrifice. In addition to labor in production, Soviet people provided assistance to the front in any form available to them. A movement began in the country for the creation of a defense fund from voluntary donations of money and material values. By the end of March 1942, it received tens of thousands of tons of food, 2.3 billion rubles, about 2 billion rubles. bonds of government loans, 7.7 tons of silver, 89.1 kg

' See: Great Patriotic... S. 403.

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gold!. There was a collection of funds for the construction of tank columns, aviation squadrons and submarines. Warm clothes were sent to the active army, which played a huge role in the first military winter. Only in the winter of 1941/42 more than | 175 thousand pairs of felt boots, 1,800 thousand sheepskin coats, jackets and cotton trousers, 1,333 thousand hats with earflaps, 2,245 thousand woolen gloves, mittens and fur mittens, 2,298 thousand pairs of woolen socks. This assistance made it possible to clothe and shoe more than 2 million soldiers and officers of the Red Army. Gifts to fighters and commanders were constantly sent to the front. Most often these were embroidered pouches,

tobacco products. Only from November 1941 to May 1942, 3.4 thousand wagons with gifts arrived at the front? More than 5.5 million Soviet citizens regularly donated their blood for the wounded. The focus of all the efforts of the Soviet state was to ensure the growth of military production. The shortage of weapons and military equipment remained extremely acute - the troops of the Red Army suffered heavy losses, including in weapons and equipment. During the campaigns of 1941, 20.5 thousand tanks, 17.9 thousand aircraft, 101.1 thousand guns and mortars, 6.29 million small arms were lost? In addition to replenishing these losses, it was necessary to compensate for the losses of hundreds of military factories that remained in the occupied territory. The mobilization of all possible resources of society has yielded results. The result of this truly titanic work was a colossal increase in the total share of military production. By the summer of 1942, it accounted for 70-80% of the total industrial production, which ensured a significant increase in military production. Beginning in November 1942, industry began to produce monthly an average of up to 2,500 aircraft, over 2,000 tanks and self-propelled guns, up to 13,500 guns and mortars, more than 13 million shells and mines, and over 200,000 tons of gasoline. By comparison

1 See Kirilenko G.V. Economic confrontation of the parties / War and war. 1941-1945 Prince. 1. S. 344.

2 Sy: Vylytsan M.A., Kondrashin V.V. Decree. op. P. 73. 3 See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 473-475.

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Compared to the first year of the war, the average monthly output of combat aircraft increased by 69%, tanks and self-propelled guns by 31%, and ammunition for artillery by 60%.

PRODUCTION OF WEAPONS IN THE USSR IN 1941-1942 2.

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The growth of military production became possible thanks to the search for new technological solutions to simplify and reduce the cost of manufacturing weapons. This approach was based on the requirement formulated by I.V. Stalin shortly after the start of the war. According to the memoirs of the people's commissar of the tank industry, V.A. Malyshev, in January 1942, Stalin very harshly demanded that the leaders of the military industry produce in large quantities weapons that had shown themselves well in battles, "without making any changes to it." As a result, whenever the question arose of adopting a new modification or model, I.V. Stalin had a hundred FORK ONE and the SAME strict condition - the number of tanks, aircraft or guns produced should not decrease by one unit. Stalin formulated his "credo" in this matter in

the beginning of the war during the discussion of the T-34 modernization project. According to the chief designer of the T-34 A.A. Morozov, Stalin

1 See Kirilenko G.V. Decree. op. P. 345. 2 Ibid. P. 342:
The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book .4. pp. 78, 80. 3 Malyshev V.A. Decree. op. S. 118.

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spoke figuratively: "... during a fire, pumps are not constructed, but water is carried in everything that can be used".

Scientists were involved to solve the tasks. A group headed by Academician E.O. Patonom developed a technology for automatic submerged arc welding of tank hulls, which increased labor productivity by eight times. Instead of the laborious and lengthy operation of welding tank turrets from bent armor plates, a special technology was introduced for casting them from armor steel into finished molds using machine molding. This method made it possible to increase the output of towers from 5-6 to 30-32 per day. For the first time in world practice, stamping on a 10,000-ton press was used to speed up the production of towers. In total, 2,670 turrets of the T-34 tank were manufactured by this method. In total, over 24,000 tanks were produced in 1942, including 12,500 T-34s and KV-1s. In contrast to the previous year, the supply of new tank equipment to the front significantly exceeded the losses suffered in battle.

In general, in the first period of the war, literally in a matter of months, a powerful tank industry was created in the east of the country, invulnerable to the enemy and capable of satisfying

to create ever-increasing needs of the army in the field.

Even more difficult situation was the Soviet aviation industry. On the eve of the war, it was possible to create a powerful production base, which employed hundreds of thousands of skilled workers and employees. Shortly after the start of the war, the average monthly production of combat aircraft was three times the pre-war level. But already at the end of autumn, production was in crisis - dozens of aircraft building and aircraft engine plants began to be evacuated. During the first half of the military year, only 8.2 thousand combat aircraft were produced, during the same time the aviation of the Red Army lost almost 18 thousand aircraft. The main center of the aircraft industry

: Quoted. Quoted from: Kostenko Yu.P. Tank (man, environment, machine). - M.: Publishing house Pravda Severa, 2000, p.39.

? Weapons of Pobeda / I.V. Bach, I.I. Vernyadub. L.I. Demkin et al.; Under total ed. V.N. Novikov. — M.: Mashinostroyeniye. 1987. S. 218-219.

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hid in the Volga region, but after the defeat of the German army near Moscow, a number of aviation enterprises returned to the capital. The production of Il-2 attack aircraft, indispensable for supporting troops on the battlefield, increased especially rapidly. By November 1942, the average monthly output of IL-2 had increased by 25 times compared to the first half of 1941. All in all, in 1942, the aviation industry supplied more than 21 thousand combat aircraft to the armed forces, which not only covered the losses suffered at the front, but also made it possible to start forming powerful aviation associations and formations!

Perhaps the munitions industry was in the most difficult position. Due to the unsuccessful location of its factories, by November 1941, more than 300 enterprises located in the west of the country were out of order, and 65% of the gunpowder production capacity was lost. These losses had to be compensated by reprofiling in 1941-1942. almost 1500 civil sector enterprises 58 people's commissariats and departments. In the autumn of 1941, when the stocks of shells of the main artillery calibers were completely exhausted, the situation became egregious. It was possible to overcome this crisis only by the spring of 1942, when the average monthly production of shells and mines reached 18.4-19.8 million pieces, air bombs - 420-500 thousand pieces>.

As a result of the mobilization of all the resources of society in order to provide the Soviet armed forces with everything necessary, the Soviet state managed to achieve a decisive turning point in military production. It was possible not only to stop the decline in production, which was the result of the loss of a large part of the potential in the western regions of the country, but also to significantly exceed the indicators of military production in 1940-1941. In 1942, Soviet military factories were able to provide the armed forces with more equipment than German factories: rifles - by 2.6 million, submachine guns - by 1.25 million, machine guns - by 240 thousand, guns - by 87 thousand, mortars - by 220 thousand, tanks - by 18 thousand, aircraft - by 10 thousand.

\ See: Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 407.

2 Ibid. S. 413.

3 Ibid. S. 414.

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The course of the war on the Soviet-German front, the seizure of new territories by the German army during the summer offensive of 1942 led to the intensification of the partisan movement in the occupied territories. By that time, the partisans had become a serious force that the Wehrmacht command had to reckon with.

From the work of Colonel-General of the Wehrmacht L. Rendulich "The Partisan War":

"Shortly after the start of the war, the first, mostly small detachments appeared, which mined supply routes, cut off telephone wires and killed individual soldiers from ambush. Already in the first months of the war, the activities of the partisans began to take on an ever wider scale. They began to attack small German units, bridge guards, communications strongholds, and even barracks and troop camps. In the spring of 1942, they already posed a serious danger to the rear communications of the German army, therefore, in order to decisively fight them, the German command had to draw up large forces into the already occupied areas, and to carry out major operations in areas where the movement assumed the most menacing dimensions - remove separate units from the front ... "".

By the beginning of 1942, the Soviet command was already fully aware of the prospects for using the partisan movement as an independent force behind enemy lines. But the success of the winter counter-offensive of the Red Army near Moscow, and the emerging confidence in the turning point in the course of the war, led the Soviet leadership to reassess the significance of the partisan movement.

From the memoirs of the head of the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement P.K. Ponomarenko:

"In December 1941 and the first half of January 1942, work on the creation of the Central and Republican headquarters of the partisan movement was in full swing. But suddenly 26

. Rendulich L. Partisan War/Results of the Second World War. Conclusions of the vanquished. - St. Petersburg: Polygon, 1998. S. 146-148.

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January G.M. Malenkov informed me that the State Defense Committee had decided to suspend all preparatory measures and that the Supreme Commander would speak with me on this matter. Indeed, on the same evening, Stalin said. the same. When I asked why the attitude towards the centralization of the partisan movement had changed, he replied:

Strictly speaking, the point of view has not changed, but it has been deemed expedient to postpone this question for the time being.

I noticed:

- This is not only a question: a number of organizational measures have been resolved, the central radio school is functioning, cadres of senior staff of headquarters have been recruited, etc.

Stalin said that this, too, should be postponed for the time being.

I had to liquidate everything that had been created with such efforts and energy within two days!

By this time, both gross miscalculations and shortcomings in the organization of control over the actions of the partisans are already obvious. At the beginning of 1942, the partisan movement in the occupied territories really became massive, the prerequisites arose for the transformation of the tactical capabilities of many detachments into a factor of operational significance, but only if the problems of organization and control of the movement were solved. And they were very sharp. In fact, the partisans were led by everyone - local party committees, NKVD bodies, the General Staff of the Red Army, front and army commands, as well as political departments and armies and fronts. This confusion in leadership often turned into tragedy. "It happened like that," recalled the well-known organizer of the partisan struggle I.G. Starinov; - some planted agents behind enemy lines, others, without knowing it, destroyed it"?

With a large number of various governing bodies

1 Next to Stalin: candid evidence / Comp. Kumanev G.A. - M.: "Epic", 1999. S. 129.

. Starinov I.G. Time Mines: Reflections of a Partisan Saboteur. - M.: Almanac "Vympel", 1999. S. 145.

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Newly, the partisans were sorely lacking in the most necessary - reliable communications, weapons, but the main thing was that general political leadership prevailed in directing their actions to the detriment of the military. The acuteness of the problem sharply aggravated in the spring of 1942, when the German special services managed to inflict a severe blow on the underground party leadership of Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania. Underground party organizations led by their secretaries were destroyed in dozens of cities. Thrown behind enemy lines, new groups of party leaders were almost immediately identified and destroyed by Gestapo agents!

At the end of May 1942, after the failure of the spring offensive of the Red Army, the Soviet leadership again returned to the idea of centralizing the control of the partisan movement. On May 30, 1942, the State Defense Committee decided to establish the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Central Headquarters of the Partisan Movement (TSSHPD) at the Headquarters.

From the memoirs of the head of the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement P.K. Ponomarenko:

"At the meeting of the State Defense Committee, held on May 30, 1942, Lavrenty Beria was the speaker on this issue. Together with Nikita Khrushchev, he prepared proposals on the main tasks and areas of activity

of the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement, which should function under the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, but under the leadership of the NKVD of the USSR. He reported on the personal composition of the new body headed by V.T. Sergienko, who, according to Beria, "proved himself very well in the position of People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Ukraine."

- Are you not sorry to give such good Ukrainian personnel to the Center? Stalin asked, not without irony, addressing Khrushchev and Beria. Following this, in a harsher tone, he said, looking only at Beria:

- Uvas - a narrow departmental approach to this extremely

| Nartizan movement during the Great Patriotic War: Documents and materials. M.: Terra, 1999. S. 39-40.

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important issue. The partisan movement, the partisan struggle, is a people's movement, a people's struggle. And the party must and will lead this movement, this struggle. Now what is required, we will fix it. And the head of the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement will be a member of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Soviet Union (6). With these words, Stalin took a blue pencil, circled my surname, which was the last in the list presented, and put it in the first place with an arrow.

During 1942, for the direct leadership of the partisan movement, its own "vertical" was built, the basis of which was the party-territorial principle. On the basis of the republican and regional committees of the CPSU (6), the Ukrainian, Belorussian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian republican headquarters of the partisan movement were created. The regional headquarters of the partisan movement operated at a lower level, the basis of which was also formed by local underground party committees. At the same time, in fact, a parallel control system was created by the army - under the Military Councils of the fronts, the headquarters of the partisan movement were also created. Only in the autumn of 1942, and only in part, this duplication was eliminated by reforming the front partisan headquarters into representations of the TsSHPL?

By the end of 1942, after solving the problems of control, the partisan movement gained a new dimension, its attacks on the rear of the Wehrmacht became more and more tangible. In the winter of 1942/43, a genuine upsurge in partisan struggle began. In a number of regions of Belarus and the Russian Federation, real partisan zones were created, uniting thousands of settlements and being outside the control of the German administration. and armies. By November 1942, 125 thousand people took part in the partisan struggle, united in 1,770 partisan detachments and brigades. The enemy was forced to throw on

2 See: "Dembitsky N.P. Leadership of the armed struggle / War and society, 1941-1945 ... Book. 1.C. 325.

3 See: History of World War II. 1939-1945 T.6. M.: Military Publishing House, 1976. S. 170.

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the fight against the partisans, several divisions of the Wehrmacht, which were so lacking at the front. A real war began in the rear of the German troops, and in fact the Wehrmacht received another front in its own rear. Emphasizing the importance of this struggle, I.V. Stalin, at a meeting in the Kremlin with the commanders of partisan detachments in September 1942, called it "our second front"!

RELATIONS WITH ALLIES: STRENGTH TESTS

1942 was the most difficult year not only for the Soviet Union, but also for the entire anti-Hitler coalition. The successes of the non-German army on the Eastern Front and the Japanese armed forces in the Far East became a real test of the strength of relations between the new allies. In the spring and summer of 1942, after the failure of the spring offensive of the Red Army and the deep advance of the Wehrmacht to the Volga and the Caucasus, the issue of opening a second front in Europe became more acute for the Soviet leadership than ever. To discuss this issue, the Soviet People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V.M. Molotov.

From the memoirs of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR V.M. Molotov:

"... In 1942, I was a participant in all the negotiations on the second front, and I was the first who did not believe that they could do it. I was calm and understood that this was an absolutely impossible thing for them. But, firstly, such a demand was politically necessary for us, and secondly, everything had to be squeezed out of them. And Stalin did not believe it either, I have no doubt about it. And it was necessary to demand! And for their own people it is necessary. People are waiting, will there be any help or not? For us, their piece of paper was of tremendous political significance. Encouraged, and then it meant a lot.

Churchill arrived and began to say that they couldn't, but I see that Stalin was very calm about this. understood

. Cit. by: Anyazkov A.S. occupation regime. Partisan movement / War and society, 1941-1945 ... Book. 2. S. 280.

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that it's impossible. Noah needed this very piece of paper. It was of great importance - for the people, for politics and for further pressure on them ... So if you can't help us, then come on help with weapons, help us with aviation ... "".

It was an extremely dangerous journey. Molotov flew a conventional Pe-8 strategic bomber over occupied Europe and then over the ocean, under the threat of enemy fighter attacks. On May 21, Molotov began negotiations with W. Churchill and A. Eden, raising from the very beginning the main question of opening a second front in Europe in order to divert at least 40 German divisions and linking it with the question of post-war borders. But the issue of borders became a stumbling block for the allies.

From the memoirs of the Prime Minister of England W. Churchill:

"Molotov arrived only on May 20, and the next morning the official discussion began. On that day and at the next two conferences, the Russians stuck to their original position and even raised specifically the question of agreeing to the occupation of Eastern Poland by the Russians. This was rejected as incompatible with the Anglo-Polish agreement of August 1939. Molotov also raised the question of recognizing in the secret agreement Russia's claims to Rumania. It was also contrary to our agreement with the United States. The negotiations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which were conducted by Eden, although they took place in the most friendly atmosphere, therefore went to a dead end.

Both Churchill and Roosevelt did not want to be bound by formal agreements, preferring to postpone this delicate issue until the end of the war. At the same time, the US president made it clear to the Soviet ambassador to the US that he did not foresee any particular difficulties in resolving this issue after the war, but preferred only a verbal agreement with Stalin. In total-

| Chuev F.I. Molotov: Semi-power ruler. — M.: OLMA-PRESS, 1999. S. 81.

2 Churchill W. World War II. In 3 books / Abbreviated translation from English. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1991. Book. 2.T. 3-4. S. 459.

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The British side proposed a draft treaty that defined the obligations of the parties for the period of the war and the postwar period, but did not touch on the issue of borders at all. This was not at all what Molotov was counting on, who regarded A. Eden's project as an empty declaration.

In the end, everything was decided by the situation at the front. TO; to that

The catastrophe of the Red Army in the Crimea has already been assured, and the troops of the South-Western Front near Kharkov have just been surrounded. Things were no better for the Allies in the Pacific - the Japanese army advanced dangerously towards Australia. In this situation, both parties were interested in signing the treaty as soon as possible. Stalin, in response to Molotov's telegram, on the same day ordered that the treaty be signed: "We do not consider it [the British draft] an empty declaration and recognize that it is an important document. There's no question of border security, but that's probably a good thing, as we have our hands free. The question of borders, or rather guarantees of the security of our borders in this or that section of our country, will be decided by force. We propose that the amendments to the old draft treaties be discarded and that the Eden Plan be taken as a basis.

On May 26, the contract was signed. The USSR and England pledged to render each other military and other assistance in the war against Germany, not to enter, except by mutual agreement, into any negotiations with the Hitlerite government, not to conclude any alliances and not to take part in any coalitions directed against on the other hand, to provide each other with all kinds of mutual economic assistance after the war.

On May 29, Molotov flew to the USA in the same Pe-8. Until June 4, his negotiations continued with President Roosevelt and members of his administration. The early opening of the second front became the main issue of the negotiations. It seemed that this time the Molotov mission was crowned with success - Roosevelt promised to launch an invasion across the English Channel in 1942, and this was mentioned in a joint communique,

` published shortly after Molotov returned to Moscow

1 Cited. In: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 446.

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woo. The Soviet People's Commissar highly appreciated the results of his visit to England and the USA: "I considered my trip in 1942 and its results to be our tremendous victory...". In reality, however; the statements made in London and Washington remained little more than words - no clarity was achieved regarding the opening of a second front. The intergovernmental agreement signed on June 11, 1942 in Washington on the principles of mutual assistance in the conduct of war, which expanded the previously existing forms of economic ties between the two countries, was of practical importance. The governments of the USSR and the USA assumed obligations to continue exchanging military materials and defense information. The agreement established the procedure for providing assistance and mutual settlements. On June 27, 1942, a similar agreement was concluded with the British government, providing for deliveries to the Soviet Union without payment, on the basis of reciprocity,

the weapons that were produced in the mother country, dominions and British colonies. In addition, England gave the Soviet Union a new loan of £20 million. article 2. These agreements became the most important factor in the joint activity of the anti-Hitler coalition.

Very soon, loyalty to allied obligations was subjected to serious tests. In early July 1942, during the escort from England to the northern ports of the Soviet Union, the allied convoy RO-17 was destroyed by German ships and aircraft. The enemy destroyed 23 out of 36 ships of the convoy. The main reason for the defeat was the order of the British Admiralty to withdraw the escort ships and disperse the convoy, after which 20 ships perished out of the total number of those destroyed. Along with the ships, 3,350 vehicles, 430 tanks, 210 aircraft and about 100,000 tons of cargo were lost. The defeat of the convoy and the huge loss of equipment and weapons were

b Chuev F.I. Decree. op. S. 82. 2 See:
Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Book 1.S. 449.

3 Three centuries of the Russian fleet. In 3.T. 3 / B.I. Rodionov, V.D. Dotsenko, G.G. Kostev and others / Ed. I.V. Kasatonova. St. Petersburg: Publishing house ".OSO5", 1996. P. 87.

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extremely painfully received by the Soviet leadership - in the summer battles of 1942, the Red Army lost up to 90 tanks, almost 30 aircraft, over 500 guns and mortars every day. Impressed by this catastrophe, the British naval command decided to temporarily stop escorting the northern convoys.

From the message of W. Churchill I.V. Stalin, July 17, 1942:

"We do not consider it right to risk our home fleet east of Bear Island or where it may be attacked by German aircraft based on the coast. If one or two of our very few powerful ships were lost, or even seriously damaged ... then all dominance in the Atlantic would be lost. Apart from the fact that this would affect our food supplies, on which we exist, it would undermine our military efforts and ... would make it impossible to create a really strong second front in 1943 ...

Therefore, with great regret, we came to the conclusion that an attempt to send the next convoy RO-18 would not benefit you and would only cause irreparable damage to the common cause. At the same time, I assure you that if we can find measures that will allow, not without reason to hope, that at least a significant part of the convoy ships will reach your country, then we will immediately

but we will resume sending them ...

Believe me, there is nothing useful and reasonable that we

.And the Americans didn't do anything to help you in your glorious fight. The President and I are constantly looking for means to overcome the extraordinary difficulties that geographic conditions, seas and air forces of the enemy present us with.

From the message of I.V. Stalin to W. Churchill, July 23, 1942:

"I received your message of 17 July.

It can be seen from the message that, firstly, the British Government refuses to continue supplying the Soviet

1 See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century ... S. 280, 484.

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Union with military materials along the northern route, and, secondly, despite. to the well-known agreed Anglo-Soviet communique on the adoption of urgent measures to organize a second front in 1942, the British Government postpones this matter until 1943.

Our naval experts consider the arguments of the British naval experts on the need to stop the delivery of military materials to the northern ports of the USSR untenable. They are convinced that with good will and readiness to fulfill the obligations assumed, the supply could be carried out regularly with heavy losses for the Germans. The order of the English Admiralty to the 17th convoy to leave the transports and return to England, and the transport ships dis-. our specialists consider it incomprehensible and inexplicable to pour in and get alone to Soviet ports without an escort. Of course, I do not believe that regular delivery to the northern Soviet ports is possible without risk and loss. But in a situation of war, not a single great deed can be carried out without risk and loss. You know, of course, that the Soviet Union is suffering incomparably more serious losses. In any case, I could not possibly imagine that the British Government would refuse to deliver military materials to us precisely now, when the Soviet Union is in particular need of deliveries of military materials at a time of serious tension on the Soviet-German front... .

As regards the second question, namely the question of organizing a second front in Europe, I am afraid that this question is beginning to take on a frivolous character. Proceeding from the situation that has arisen on the Soviet-German front, I must state in the most categorical manner that the Soviet Government cannot reconcile itself to postponing the organization of a second front in Europe until 1943.